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Cover picture: Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's woodcut, "Häuser aus Nidda" (1913), on show at the Marlborough Gallery, 39 Old Bond Street, London W1 until the end of December in the exhibition *Prints and Drawings from Germany, 1894-1931*.

From Israelites into Jews

Fergus Millar

W. D. DAVIES and LOUIS FINKELSTEIN

The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume One, Introduction; The Persian period 461pp. Cambridge University Press. £33. 0524218802

Those who purchase this very strange volume must be careful on no account to throw away the dust-jacket. For it is there, and there alone, that they will learn that this is the first of four volumes covering the history of Judaism from the Persian period to the middle of the third century AD, that is until after the codification of the Mishnah. So it is not the first step in a complete history of Judaism - an enterprise which would embrace a vast variety of interesting and important things, from the redaction of the Talmud to the world of the medieval Eastern Mediterranean (brilliantly illuminated by S. D. Goitein), to the experience of the Christian Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, Zionism, or contemporary attempts to formulate a Jewish feminism. Such a project has indeed been undertaken, for instance in S. W. Baron's great multi-volume *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, still in progress, or in Silver and Martin, *History of Judaism*, 1-III (1974). But this history of Judaism stops - or is due to stop - with the Mishnah. Why, is not explained.

As for the starting-point, that was also evidently felt to need no explanation. It is indeed an established scholarly convention to mark off the pre-exilic religion of the Jews as "Israelite", and to use "Judaism" for what followed. But first, such a convention has yet to establish itself outside scholarly circles. The educated general reader could be forgiven for surprise if informed that the faith which Isaiah proclaimed in the second half of the eighth century, or Jeremiah in the second half of the seventh and the first half of the sixth, was not Judaism.

Like the word of Yahweh, House of Jacob, and all your families of the House of Israel. Thus says Yahweh, "What shortcoming did your fathers find in me that led them to desert me? Vainly they pursued, vainly they became. They never said, 'Where is Yahweh, who brought us out of the land of Egypt and led us through the wilderness, through a land not sown and a land of drought and darkness, a land where no one passes, and no man lives?' I brought you to a fertile country to enjoy its produce and good things; but no sooner had you entered than you defiled my land, and made my heritage detestable. The priests have ever asked, 'Where is Yahweh?' Those who administer the Law have no knowledge of me." (Jeremiah 2, Jerusalem Bible)

The non-expert reader, for whom a Cambridge History is presumably designed, might feel that these words sounded quite like Judaism to him. Similarly, Josephus could portray his own role in relation to the fall of Jerusalem in the Romans in AD 70 as having been explicitly modelled on that of Jeremiah in the period leading up to the Captivity. To him there was a single unbroken tradition from the Creation, with which he was to begin his *Antiquities*, in the present.

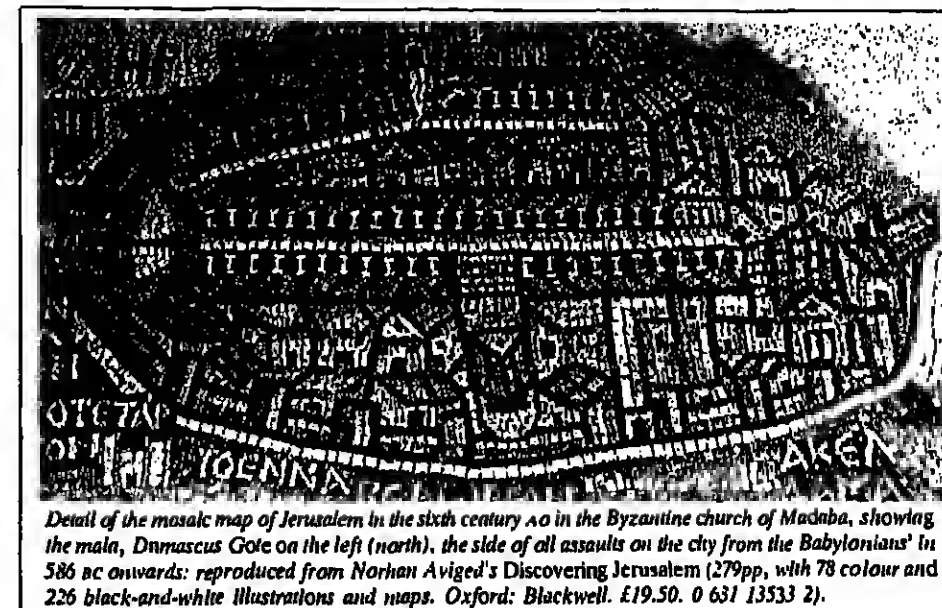
Naturally, it does not follow that the presuppositions of devout Jews like Josephus should not be questioned by scholars; and it is a perfectly feasible proposition that whatever observations were re-established, or established, in the Persian period, after Cyrus' proclamation of the end of the Captivity, were in significant ways qualitatively different from the "Israelite" cult of Yahweh which had preceded it. For example, as Geza Vámos points out to me, Georg Fohrer, in his *History of Israelite Religion* (1973), saw the Persian period as marking the abandonment of the inspiration of prophecy and the advent of legalism. But, first, the validity of any such conception must be explained and justified in any standard work addressed to a public outside the circle of Old Testament scholars. Second, that process must itself involve some attempt to define by way of introduction what stage "Israelite" religion had reached before the Captivity. Do we know what historical works, books of law, books of prophecy or religious poetry (and in what form) the Israelites possessed by the late seventh century? And if that question cannot be answered in anything like categorical terms, it should at least be made clear what are the areas of relative agreement,

or of maximum disagreement, among scholars. To take one concrete example, it seems to me a matter of more or less general agreement that the "book of the law" which King Josiah claimed had been discovered in the Temple in his eighteenth year (623/2 ac) - either at the beginning of his reform (2 Kings) or after six years of reform (2 Chronicles) - was either Deuteronomy or something which in content was very like it.

Given that so complex a stage in religious evolution had already been reached, some historical introduction, to place the supposed origins of "Judaism" in context, was thus absolutely essential, and it is most regrettable that the two very distinguished editors, W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein, have not provided it (nor indeed contributed any sections of this volume). Moreover, if the Captivity and the destruction of the First Temple mark the end of "Israelite" religion, should we not see "Judaism" as having its origins in Babylonia before the Persian conquest? In fact the editors themselves appear to think this, referring in

had to be linked to a more detailed section on the known areas of Jewish settlement, and on the ecology, vegetation and animal life of the region (ie, on the forms of edible matter which could be acquired by hunting, gathering, pastoralism or agriculture, and to which the evolving rules of diet and purity would be applied). As it is, the chapter is not used or alluded to in any way in any of the following sections, and thus remains in perfect isolation. It also ends with the ominous note: "This chapter was written in 1973. The maps were added at the suggestion of the editors in 1977." We should perhaps forbear to ask why it took four years to conclude that a chapter on geography needed some maps. But, more seriously, it is hardly likely that professional ways of analysing a geographical region have not advanced significantly in the past decade. The most elementary standards of editorial responsibility require that a chapter written in 1973 should not be published, as it stands, in 1984.

There follows a thorough survey, by Rappoport, of the Jewish and non-Jewish coinages of



Detail of the mosaic map of Jerusalem in the sixth century AD in the Byzantine church of Madaba, showing the main, Damascus Gate on the left (north), the side of all assaults on the city from the Babylonians in 586 ac onwards: reproduced from Norman Avi-Yonah's *Discovering Jerusalem* (279pp, with 78 colour and 226 black-and-white illustrations and maps. Oxford: Blackwell. £19.50. 0 631 33333 2).

the first sentence of their preface to "Judaism, by which is meant the form which the religion of Israel assumed in and after the Babylonian exile". Here again, given the obvious fact of the arbitrariness of all historical periods, the choice of a starting-point is a matter of decision and definition. Without closer guidance as to how "Judaism" is to be defined, and why it should be seen as originating in a particular period, the reader is left in the dark. He is also presented, after that initial sentence, with an account of the origins of "Judaism" in which the Babylonian Captivity is treated in a short section which comes after the central series of chapters on the Persian period. There is in fact some sort of reason for this, namely that the main documentary evidence for Jews in Babylonia in this broad period comes from the fifth century, and thus relates to Jews who did not take the chance to return. But it is not a reason which makes sense in the context of a history of Judaism.

But in any case if this is in fact intended as a history of Judaism (even one which does not reach the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds)? So the title states. But the dust-jacket speaks rather of "the history of the Jews from the exile in 587 B.C.E. to the codification of the Mishnah about 250 C.E.". Much of the very interesting, if more than variegated, material presented in this first volume seems more clearly related to this alternative definition of the objective than to "Judaism". This is certainly true of nearly all of the three-section *Introduction*, which comprises "The Geography of Palestine and the Levant" (by D. Baly), "Numismatics" (by Uriel Rappoport), and "Calendars and Chronology" (by the late and much lamented Elias Bickerman, who was also a member of the Advisory Editorial Board). Whether these are the matters to which the curiosity of a student of the origins of Judaism would first turn may well be doubted.

Professor Baly's chapter on geography, including the geological structure and climate of the region, is certainly fascinating to read, and extends in a general way to cover routes and patterns of settlement in the historical period in question. But to bring it closer to the actual subject-matter of the work (whatever that is), it would surely, at the very least, have

the region, from the Persian period to the later Roman Empire. But here too the author has clearly conceived of his task as writing an ancillary chapter to a history of the Jews, rather than of Judaism, in the period. For the latter purpose the only direct relevance of the coinages of the gentle cities of the region would have been as evidence for the range of different pagan cults practised in them. For Judaism what would have been relevant is essentially the symbols and legends on the Jewish coinage proper, inscribed in Hebrew or Aramaic; this comprises primarily the coins of the late Persian and very early Hellenistic period; the Hasmonaean coinage; and above all the coinage of the two great revolts of AD 66-74 and 132-5. These coins are of course authentic and primary (if often enigmatic) documents of Jewish communal identity and aspirations. They are naturally discussed in this chapter, with the legends given in transliteration (the entire volume, issued as a standard work on Judaism by a university press, is devoid of Hebrew type). If the subject is indeed Judaism, these coins would have been better discussed in the context of the circumstances in which they were produced; one could well compare Peter Schaefer's rigorous treatment of what can and cannot be deduced from the Bar-Kochba coins in his monograph of 1981 on the Bar-Kochba war. If what is needed is a preliminary overview, putting together the essentials of what is known of the properly Jewish coins, it is done in five pages (with Hebrew type) in Appendix A of the revised edition of Emil Schürer's standard work, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, I (1973); neither this nor Volume II (1979), however, scores any mention in the volume under review.

Finally, in the *Introduction* there is the typically learned, allusive, condensed and suggestive chapter by Bickerman, "Calendars and Chronology" (in fact discussing chronology - ie successive systems of identifying years in sequence - and then calendars, ie the division of the year). Once again, it is not entirely clear what this contributes to the understanding of Judaism. What would have made such a contribution would have been a survey of the evolution of the major and minor festivals, their location within the year, the manner in which they were

celebrated at successive periods and (so far as this is possible) the significance attached to them. It is not until much later in the volume, with Morton Smith's chapter on Jewish religious life, that we encounter a two-page discussion of festivals (as celebrated in the Persian period), advancing among other things the view that the Day of Atonement was introduced in the fourth century ac. At least by the first century AD, the major festivals, Passover above all, had become the focal events of the Jewish year. For example, John's Gospel, with its independent narrative structure, is built round a sequence of visits by Jesus to Jerusalem for festivals: Passover (2:13); "a festival" - Pentecost? (5:1); Tabernacles (7:2); Hanukkah (11:22); and the final Passover (12:12). Disentangling Easter from Passover was to remain a contentious issue in the Church until Nicea, and backsliders were attracted to the Jewish high festivals even later. So, if it is true, as this volume would imply, that the annual festivals had not yet acquired a central importance in the Persian period, a treatment of their evolution up to the third century AD would have been of the greatest value.

No clear principle divides the three chapters of the *Introduction* from some placed within the section on the Persian period itself. Thus, in this part, archaeology is represented by Ephraim Stern's chapter on the archaeology of Persian Palestine, a very thorough treatment which, however, suffers from the disadvantage of having no maps or plans, or of categorizing the material by types (including a discussion of the coins, partly reduplicating Rappoport's section), of being wholly innocent of modern ideas as to settlement-patterns or the application of anthropological models to archaeological evidence, of over-interpreting the evidence so as to relate it to events which happen to be mentioned in narrative sources, and of having been completed in 1973.

One should not complain too much, however. Stern's invaluable work, from which the above chapter was drawn, was finally published in English as *The Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538-332 ac* (1982), and represents really the most thorough archaeological account of any area of the Persian empire.

The chapter by Joseph Naveh and Jonas Greenfield, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Persian Period", might also well have been expanded to cover the whole period, and have formed part of a general introduction. There is no need to complain of what is offered, which is clear and valuable - or at least as clear and valuable as it can be, given the exclusive use of transliteration, and the absence of text-figures allowing the reader to follow the evolution of the scripts concerned. Again, the chapter suffers from the long delay in publication: since it was written (in the mid 1970s?), there have appeared - to give only a few salient examples - the definitive publication of the Aramaic/Greek/Lycian trilingual inscription of the Aramaic/Xenian (1979); an edition by Greenfield and Porten (1982) of the Aramaic version of the great edict of Darius I from Behistun, inscribed there in Old Persian and Akkadian; also J. T. Milik's controversial edition of the Enoch fragments from Qumran (1976), and, perhaps most significant, J. A. Fitzmyer and D. J. Harrington's *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (1978). What has still not been published is F. M. Cross's edition of the fourth-century ac Aramaic papyri from Wadi Daliyeh, discovered in 1962 - but that is another story, part of the pattern of non-publication of vital new material which hangs over all of the period to be covered by CHI.

What has been published, however, in Aramaic and Hebrew, from Qumran, renders even more urgent a series of fundamental questions which are not faced in this volume: for questions of script and language ought to have led on to others relating to writing materials and the form in which literary works were preserved (what was a book of the law?); and from there to the questions raised by Smith himself in his paper "The Present State of Old Testament Studies" in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1969. In reading the now established text of the Hebrew Old Testament with its elaborate pointing (invented in the early medieval period), on which so much of the meaning

Josephus

often depends, how close are we to what anyone wrote in the Persian period, or copied (of course still without pointing) in the Hellenistic and Roman periods?

Beyond that, there are the major problems of literary composition as such. This volume contains quite interesting and suggestive chapters on Prophecy and Psalms and on Wisdom literature. But what the reader for whom the work is presumably intended surely needs is, first, a systematic introduction to the Jewish literature of the period, and then above all a discussion of historiography (with perhaps a substantial appendix on the Jewish historical novella – for instance Esther, Ruth, Tobit). "Historiography" here means two things, which in the case of Chronicles – Ezra – Nehemiah cannot be separated: the rewriting of earlier history in the Persian (and, once again, the exilic) period; and the fragmentary and confusing historical narrative relating what happened in the Persian period itself – narratives which were later reflected, or rewritten, also in 1 Esdras and in Josephus, *Antiquities*, XI, and were to be alluded to in Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira) 49 and in 2 Maccabees 1–2. The brief discussion of Jewish historiography in the excellent chapter by P. R. Akroyd cannot be a substitute for a systematic treatment of the complex questions which surround the narrative tradition, with its programmatic rewritings of earlier versions.

The best parts of this volume are in fact those which are in some sense peripheral, or better, preparatory to the (presumed) central theme, namely Judaism as a religion. The most satisfactory section is the last one, on the Diaspora, with paired chapters by M. Dandamayev of Leningrad on Babylonia in the Persian period, and Bickerman on the Babylonian captivity (thus, as mentioned above, placed after the chapters on Judaea after the Return); and Edda Bresciani on Egypt as a satrapy, and Bezalel Porten on the Jews in Egypt. The latter section gives primarily an excellent account of the Jewish colony at Elephantine, drawn from the Aramaic documents found on papyrus. From different aspects, alternative treatments of the same documents are offered by Naveh and Greenfield on Aramaic, and

Smith on Jewish religious life.

As the reader may have noticed, religious life has not played a large part in what has been said so far. Persian religion is indeed surveyed in a typically elegant chapter by Mary Boyce, who suggests that it was the Zoroastrian example which led to the transformation of the Jewish purity code from one concerned solely with cultic matters to one related to every aspect of daily life. Whether such an influence could have been generally felt throughout the empire (as she suggests) depends on how "Persian" the empire was, and the extent of actual Persian settlement outside Iran proper (an open question). Otherwise, this would have to be seen as an influence felt by Nehemiah himself at the court of Artaxerxes, where he was cupbearer (Neh 2:1), and then transmitted by him in his period of reform. But, so, there is remarkably little concentration on purity in Nehemiah's first-person memoirs (Neh 1-7; 11-13), which focus on rebuilding, on social reform and on separation from Ammonites and Moabites.

As regards external influences – or, alternatively, the forms of cult among other peoples from which Jewish monotheism struggled perpetually (and successfully) to separate itself – the Captivity had of course been in Babylonia, where a substantial Jewish diaspora remained in the Persian period. It is all the more unfortunate that Bickerman's highly suggestive pages on the religious situation of the Captivity, and the varied reactions to Babylonian polytheism and idolatry, come in the wrong place in the book. But at least they are there. What is lacking is any systematic treatment of the religious practices and beliefs of the immediately neighbouring peoples in Palestine and its region – the Phoenicians (who are relatively well known), Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites and so forth. Even more important, and very close to the central theme, would have been a section on the religion of Samaria, which resulted at the very end of the Persian period to the establishment of a separate temple of Yahweh on Mt. Gerizim, above Nablus. The religious identity of this community in their own eyes is now illuminated by two new Hellenistic inscriptions put up by emigrant

Samaritans on Delos, who call themselves in Greek "the Israelites on Delos who pay their first-fruits to Holy Mt. Gerizim".

The central element of this volume as it stands is provided by two sharply contrasting chapters which in effect deal with the same subject-matter, the re-establishment of the Temple in the late sixth century and the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah, both (almost certainly) in the fifth. To take the second of these first, Smith's chapter, "Jewish Religious Life in the Persian Period", includes surveys of the evidence of documents from Babylonia and from Elephantine in Upper Egypt, and of the archaeology of Palestine, with no cross-reference to, or use of, the relevant other chapters in this volume, except Bickerman's on Babylonia. It then launches into a confident and detailed reconstruction of the course and dates of Ezra's and Nehemiah's reforms, the social structure of the community, the political/theological divisions within it, the ideological positions taken up by the various groups and the literary and theological work they undertook. On the face of it, it should be reassuring that we know so much: "The Levites produced Psalms, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, and edited Haggaï, Zechariah and perhaps other books. Wealthy laymen were the authors of Job, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Jonah, Tobit and the Song of Songs . . ." For justification of these assignments a footnote invites the reader to consult Smith's exceptionally interesting and powerful book of 1971, *Palestinian Parties and Politics which shaped the Old Testament*. The reader may, however, encounter some frustration at this stage, for that book, produced by Columbia University Press, is now out of print, and to the best of the reviewer's knowledge was never on sale in England. Yet the entire chapter (evidently written not later than the mid-1970s, and probably earlier) depends upon it. Without the possibility of recourse to the book, the chapter remains a series of bold assertions, insights and suggestions, the detailed justification of which is not available.

It would be nice to think that we could take all of this impressive historical reconstruction on trust; for if we could, we would find ourselves in possession of almost everything

that we really need in order to understand the vital period in the life of the Jewish people. Unfortunately, a glance at Akroyd's surprisingly careful chapter, "The Jewish Community in Palestine", largely devoted to a detailed examination of the narratives about Ezra and Nehemiah, will quickly dispel any illusion of any certainty can be reached about their dates and purposes and historical significance.

This contrast does at least exemplify the guiding principle set out in the editors' preface, namely that of indeterminacy and contradiction: "No effort has been made to reconcile contributors' differing points of view. Different approaches to and interpretations of the same sources will be found here, and even contradictory treatments of certain events and movements." This is admirable in its way, but it remains obscure why the end-product is a conglomeration of chapters of indeterminacy overall purpose, different in character, written at different times over quite a long period, almost wholly unrelated to each other – and be called *The Cambridge History of Judaism*. Those in search of systematic guidance at approaches and problems in this period, whether students, interested "general readers", or scholars from neighbouring areas should still go elsewhere, to John Bright's *History of Israel* (third edition, 1960) or J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller, *Israelite and Judaean History* (1977). For the evolution of religious institutions it would still be better to use R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (1962). Those who take the very literally, and approach this volume in the hope of enlightenment on a stage in the evolution of Judaism in a theological sense, rather say Jewish monotheism, will find much that is in varying degrees relevant, interesting, formative or suggestive, bearing on the wider environment, history, literature and religious ideas of the Jewish people. But if they still feel somewhat disappointed, it might be better somewhere in this erratically edited volume the main character has got lost. For, as it seems to be in intention the history of the religion, there is remarkably little which deals directly on how Jews in the middle of the first millennium conceived of the nature of God.

The Tatars on the other hand are known to us only from Western sources and there are certainly legendary elements in the tales about them. Maalouf describes them as fanatical Muslims, but the epithet "Tatar" perhaps derives from the Armenian *ink'ur* meaning king, suggesting that the Tatars were not Franks at all, but Armenian hangers-on.

Moving on in time, it is tempting to think that wily compromisers like Raymond III, Count of Tripoli, and Frederick II, the great Crusader Emperor, spoke fluent Arabic, but in both cases this proves surprisingly hard to document. One of the very few Crusader biographies who is known to have spoken Arabic is Reynald of Châtillon, the aggressive, ambitious and scourge of Islam. He seems to be a Muslim prisoner. That the murder of Count of Montfort was ordered by Maalouf is not established fact. But there are quite a number of other suspects; Ibn al-Athir and a late Asser source suggest that Saladin was responsible. Although Ibn Abi Usayba later claimed for the famous Jewish philosopher, Moses ben Maimonides was Saladin's personal physician, all the other evidence suggests that this was not the case.

Maalouf also has the Venetians conspiring with the Muslims to divert the Fourth Crusade from Egypt to Constantinople. He must have been basing himself on Carl Hopf's willful misreading of a Venetian-Egyptian treaty of 1202, and Hopf published his research in 1867, and many years later Gabriel Hanotaux, with much ponderousness (he furnished the model for Proust's Norpois), conclusively refuted it in 1908 – thus destroying the theory of the spiritual pact. And yet the Venetians' spiritual pact remains a great favourite in popular histories of the Crusades. There are many other errors of fact in Maalouf's book, but if it is not good history, it is still a good story.

Performing a European act

Adam Mars-Jones

DAVID PLANTE
The Foreigner
237pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press
£9.95.
00171 29042

David Plante's new novel is an obscure book, but out in the obvious ways that books can be obscure; it has an utterly defeating clarity. It is impressively written, and incorporates some shining detail, but its method denies it any sort of momentum. With its scrupulous avoidance of cumulative effects, *The Foreigner* is likely to remain for the reader a body of words (many of them, admittedly, spare and elegant) rather than an achieved novel to which adjectives such as spare and elegant can safely be applied. The narrator-hero of the novel is not identified as a Francoeur from the trilogy *The Francoeur Family*, but there can have been few Francoeur-Coadrians born in Providence, Rhode Island, round 1940 whose elder brother, Thoma, a major in the Marine Corps, paid the bills for their travel and education. The postcard, moreover, which the hero of *The Foreigner* buys half-way through the book arrives at the Francoeur home towards the end of *The Family* (1978), sent to his parents by André Francoeur. The umbilical cord has been painted out rather than cut, and inevitably the new arrival is somewhat prevented from striking out on its own.

It is 1959. The narrator, having derived a

romantic idea of France from paintings in Boston museums, goes there to study. On the boat across, he meets a black woman (the first black person he has spoken to) and eventually goes with her to Barcelona, where he gets drawn, both emotionally and financially, into her destructive relationship with Vincent, an American criminal. Finally he travels, not back to Paris where the school year is about to begin, but to the south of Spain, to deliver a letter on behalf of his landlady in Paris, a political exile from the Spanish Civil War.

The narrator is motivated by two desires: to have an identity, and not to be an American. He wants therefore to become a foreigner, but inevitably in France and Spain it is his American origin that marks him out. He is upset to find the Mass in France the same as the Mass in Providence, to find Europe in this respect inadequately other. He works hard at being a foreigner: "Hot, I went to the window, opened it wide, then, leaning out, pushed to open the shutters, and as I did I had an image of myself performing an authentic European act." Later, he is attracted to Spao because "it was a country where there was no daily living".

Unfortunately, these existential preoccupations make the narrator almost mystically passive, keeping himself separate from experience as he awaits an event that will transform him; he wants to be "sensitive not just to this or that, but to everything." Other people, in the meantime, make his decisions for him.

There is no trace of hindsight in the point of view, nor of the emotional hindsight known as irony; it's probably permissible to experience a

faint tightening of the lips when you read the first paragraph of Chapter 4 ("I felt totally sear"), but the comic opportunities of this callow voice are scrupulously passed up. The book is written in the past tense, but it might as well be in the present for all the advantage it takes of its pastness. On the first page, for instance: "But America, whether I liked it or not, would take me out of myself, to where there was no salvation and destroy me." This prognostication is flatly contradicted by the action of the book.

Camus may lurk behind the title, but the book's acknowledged tutelary writer is Hemingway. The epigraph is his ("In Spain you could not tell about anything"), and he is the narrator's model of an American with an achieved European identity. Hemingway's characters, though, tend to be emptied out by their experiences, while Plante's narrator-hero is empty before, during and after experience. His story is essentially a series of exquisitely modulated paralyses, variations on a theme of autism.

Plante's preoccupations are constant and his style, of austere incantation, is distinctive; the drawback is that his best moments are more like his worst moments than they are like anything else. Oddly, too, he tends to generate similar passages in sharply contrasting contexts. Daniel Francoeur making love with Lilian in *The Woods* (1982):

She lay on her back, and he, close to her, moved up and down her body, saw her body in the details he risked touching: an eye, an eyebrow, an arm, a thigh, a leg, the nose and the nostrils and the partition, the side round of the chest and the waist, the mouth open to teeth and tongue, the jaw, a temple, a cheek, the side of the face, the groin and the pubic patch and the mound, the throat, an ankle and foot and toes, a palm and fingers, ear and lobe of ear, chin, hair, hip, wrist, belly, knee, elbow, neck, ribs, shoulder.

The hero of *The Foreigner* (?André Fran-

coeur) being forced to watch the coupling of his friend Angela and the psychotic gangster she is obsessed with:

Vincent stretched his body beside Angela's at a distance from her, and looked at it, and each part he looked at he touched with the tips of his fingers: an eyelid, an eyebrow, an arm, a thigh, a leg, her nose, the side round of her chest, her waist, her mouth and teeth and tongue, her jaw, temple, cheek, the groin and the pubic patch and the mound, the throat, an ankle and a foot and toes, a palm and fingers, ear and lobe of ear, chin, hair, hip, waist, belly, knee, elbow, neck, ribs, shoulder. It was as though he were concentrating on them all, these details, to bring them together into a body, which, then, he put his arms about.

The character of these sexual acts could hardly be more different; the use of the same words to describe them suggests an odd dissociation in the writer, the cultivation of stylistic virtues in isolation.

Certainly *The Foreigner* is more like a list of features carefully rendered than an imagined face or body; this time round, anyway, David Plante's obsession with the problematics of detail (with bodies which are the only access we have to souls, but are also in themselves the opposites of souls) seems more like a tic of the author's than an issue actually confronted by his characters.

CATHERINE AIRD
Harm's Way
218pp. Collins. £6.95.
0002313987

Catherine Aird's latest Calleshire novel opens well, with a row dropping a human finger in front of two members of the Berebury Footpaths Society who are exploring a public right-of-way. Detective-Inspector C. D. Sloan is given the task of looking for the remainder of the remains. Light, ingenious and a pleasure to read.

T.J.B.

On the Saracen side

Robert Irwin

AMIN MAALOUF
The Crusades Through Arab Eyes
Translated by Jon Rothschild
293pp. Al-Saqi Books, 26 Westbourne Grove, London W2 5RH. £20 (paperback, £6.95). 0863561136

In 1938, the year in which a short-lived union of Egypt and Syria was inaugurated, Colonel Nasser made a speech in which he remarked: "It was England and France that attacked this region under the name of the Crusades; and the Crusades were nothing else but British-French imperialism . . ." It was not accident that General Algeby, commander of the British forces, said on arriving in Jerusalem (1917), "Today the Wars of the Crusades are completed."

Amin Maalouf's perspective on the Crusades is less flagrantly anachronistic than Nasser's or Allenby's, but it is similarly long-term. In the prologue to *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* he observes that the Crusaders' sack of Jerusalem in 1099 was "the starting point of millennial hostility between Islam and the West". And in his conclusion he points out that in modern times Israel has regularly been compared to the Crusader states, Nasser to Saladin, and the Suez expedition to a new Crusade. Saladin's famous victory over Guy de Lusignan in 1187, Hittin, is even commemorated in the name borne by one of the three divisions of the Palestine Liberation Army.

In between the prologue and the conclusion Maalouf tells an inspiring story – that of the dramatic intrusion of the barbarian Crusaders into the civilized Near East at the end of the eleventh century, and of the slow gathering of Muslim resistance to the Crusaders which culminated in the expulsion of these still only semi-civilized intruders in 1291. To tell the story of the Crusades from the Arab side is not the straightforward exercise that it might seem at first sight. In the first place the campaigns

against the Crusaders and Latin settlers in the East were on the whole conducted by Turkish and Kurdish generals and élite troops. Tughtigin, Zengi and Baybars, for example, were Turks, and Saladin was a Kurd. Sometimes the Arabs fought as low-grade auxiliaries or as volunteers for the Holy War. More often they looked on as civilian bystanders. Second, medieval Arabs who did write accounts of these campaigns were never able to see the Crusades as a whole, and they were usually oblivious to the religious impulses behind the crusading movement. A special term for crusaders, *al-hurub al-salibiyya*, was introduced into the currency of the Arabic language by Lebanese Christians only in the seventeenth century. But even in the West the word *crusade* for crusade did not appear until the thirteenth century.

The lack of a word for the deed did not prevent either side from giving an exciting if somewhat fragmentary account of their encounters, however. Maalouf's narrative, which draws almost entirely on Arabic sources, is very readable. It first appeared in French and has been well translated by Jon Rothschild (though I wish he was not so fond of using "primordial" to mean dominant). Maalouf's account is partisan for the Muslim side, but this may be welcomed as a counterbalance to the older classic narratives of Grousset (Francophile) and Runciman (Hellenophile). One is made aware that the Crusaders were not facing an oriental horde of inscrutable "Saracens", but individuals with individual aims and legitimate ambitions. The stage villains and spear-carriers, the Muslim opposition in the story of the Crusades, are given distinctive features by Maalouf. Ridwan is indolent but crafty, Alp Arslan mad, Nur al-Din saintly, Saladin jachrymose and so on. For this at least, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* may be warmly recommended to lay readers and students. But this recommendation should be accom-

panied by a warning. As Maalouf himself observes, he has set out to write "a true life novel" of the Crusades. It is not a work of scholarship. It is more readable than a work of scholarship, but it is also less true. There is much in it that is contentious or erroneous and much that is part of the drifting, unreferenced folklore of the Crusades, playing the same role in its historiography as "vanishing bitch-lulker" stories do elsewhere. It is surely misleading to date the beginning of "a millennial hostility between Islam and the West" to 1099. What about the Christian-Muslim conflicts that were already taking place in eleventh-century North Africa, Sicily and Spain? Even more pertinent, what about the struggle being waged by the Anatolian *ghazis* (boly warriors) against Byzantium? This had a crucial if indirect role in provoking the First Crusade.

The notion that the First Crusade was an act of aggression against the Arab Nation is anachronistic. So too is the assertion that Antioch was one of the great cities of Arab Asia. The Crusaders captured it from the Turks in 1098. Until 1085 it had been a Byzantine centre of government and its Arab population is unlikely to have been very large. That the cannibalism practised by a section of the Crusader army at Ma'arra sent a thrill of horror through the Muslim world is also implausible. Maalouf's account conflates two things – the cannibalism practised by that contingent under duress of famine and the cultic cannibalism of those mysterious beggar-warriors on the fringes of the First Crusade, the Tatars. Why should the Muslims have been so very shocked by the cannibalism of starving soldiers? Cannibalism was the occasional necessary option in the famine-stricken Near East. It was resorted to in extremity by the population of Fatimid Cairo in 1065, Ayyubid Cairo in 1201-2 and Mamluk Cairo in 1297. In fact, Ibn al-Qalanisi and Ibn al-Athir set the Ma'arra incident in its context and refrain from further comment.

Vehicles for meditation

Barbara Hardy

ALAN SILLITOE
Down from the Hill
218pp. Granada. £7.95.
0246123179

This is an entirely individual novel. Nothing in it could be replaced out of the common box of fashionable spare parts. It is skilfully crafted but looks as natural as leaves on the tree. It refreshes myth through imagination, not cold imitation. It contemplates love and hostility, inventiveness and flatness, social hope and cynicism, through an intelligent medium which shifts under your eyes, as real art does. It actually seems to have been written out of the self-delighting impulse to think and feel in the language of fiction.

This is a memory novel which doubles the act of memory in a story of two journeys, one in 1945, one nearly forty years later. The unprosperous research into time past discovers that a journey can't be recovered, though the novelist proves this by imagining both trips and setting them side by side in loving and ironic contrast. The young Paul Morton, a first-person narrator, and his middle-aged self, presented in the third person, are manipulated by the authorial imagination, which can return, despite the neat antithetical balance, the structure allows for a variety of flashback. The young man remembers, though he does a lot of participating. The older man looks ahead a bit, though he has more to remember. The acts of recall aren't simple and single, but manifold. Consciousness is presented as a temporal lodge-podge. The first part of the novel is especially good at the difficult job of presenting time present, through the dated, open, exposed awareness of the seventeen-year-old boy, cycling for dear life through the post-war Midlands landscape.

Alan Sillitoe is very good at the motions and moods of journeys, on foot, in flight, or as here, by bike and car. The bike trip covers the miles slowly, the car moves fast. Both are aptly and wittily varied vehicles for meditation and fantasy. The form is ancient, but it never looks over its shoulder with bookish evocation of Odysseus, quixotic trails, or pilgrims' progress. Like Ulysses and Huckle Finn, Paul is a story-teller who deals with the people he meets on the road by making up identities for himself and for them. Strangeness is a great stimulus to invention, and imaginary stories are fitted to the people as fast as imaginary people spring into life at a hint from a stab of feeling or a

name of a place. Moreover, the other travellers are also story-tellers, like the people encountered by Tom Jones and Nicholas Nickleby. The story is comically and richly faithful to its great tradition, crammed with narratives which are socially revealing models, funny and pathetic anecdotes, and images of the hero's consciousness and art. The young Paul creates as he breathes. He is to become the older Paul, writer of screenplays, assertive in his non-stop fantasies and convincingly touched in as a professional. Some of the stories are briefly brilliant, like the fantasies about a vampire or a jealous husband, the latter fragment realized in a stroke of style, "And for God's sake get my dinner on the table. I'm bloody starving."

It's a story about stories. Paul knows that he constructs reality out of lies. Both young and older Paul dream their dreams of fair women, for the story is about love. Fantasy and reality blur. A real girl called Alice Sands is no more real than a playfully invented one called after a place, Edith Weston. Both stand for an early, pure, and romantically unconsummated love, but they are created and regarded with irony as well as desire, known to be futures as unreachable as the past. Both young and older Paul are open to love, and the erotic fantasies, and erotic acts are done with delicacy and the right touch of roughness.

Down from the Hill both is and is not a novel about politics. The young Paul observes that "All times were historic." The book suggests that some times are more historic than others in its focus on 1945, after the Labour landslide, and 1983, after Mrs Thatcher's second victory. But the times are not equally represented. The 1983 trip includes an encounter with unemployment, and there is no tolerance of the gloom of our moment now. The 1945 trip includes no image of revolutionary elation, but plays down the Labour victory. One character complains that though there's been a landslide he can't find anyone who's voted Labour. I tell the same about the book, though the reasons for its political images may be legitimately autobiographical or ideological. The older Paul speaks out of a political, as well as an emotional loss; his bright observations are effective metaphors, like the mention of anti-Semitism, but there is a gap the novel never fills in: between the middle-aged disguised man and the apolitical young Paul. The rest of the life between the journeys is there, in its professional, familial, and amorous implications, but the story is left backgrounded and incomplete. Fair enough, perhaps. It is a novel, not a history, an uncomfortable one.

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John May

Nurts and caviar

John Melmoth

J. P. DONLEAVY
De Alfonso Tennis: The Superlative Game of Eccentric Champions; Its History, Accoutrements, Rules, Conduct and Regimen 223pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £8.95. 0297 785427

In *Deadeye Dick*, his most recent novel, Kurt Vonnegut frequently takes the opportunity to pass on recipes for chitlins, grits, sauerkraut and the like. In *De Alfonso Tennis* J. P. Donleavy goes further: he not only hands on hints about mixing breakfast cereals and fixing beef sausages, but also unpacks a complete regimen based on giving up sugar, butter, eggs, cream and chocolate, and all pills and poisons. He indulges (or feigns to indulge) the kind of health food paranoia that sees the world as composed entirely of carbohydrates and saturated fats. Playing a kind of Betty Crocker *manqué* is apparently a popular way for distinguished writers of playful fictions to prove that they have not lost touch with life's little particularities, to simultaneously deny and demonstrate their sophistication.

It may be that our primary concerns are for bodily and material matters, nor should the novelist, in all conscience, fight shy of the fact. This does not mean, however, that the dietary and gustatory facts of life are capable of standing and speaking unaided for themselves.

De Alfonso Tennis is one of the very few novels to be prefaced by both a claim to intergalactic merchandizing rights and a timely health warning about the perils of keeping fit. It is a poignant novella, in the manner of *The Saddest Summer of Samuel S.*, hodgepodge around by the rules of the game and the interminable oaming of sports-related parts. The setting is a transatlantic cruise to New York. PJ, through whom the author is engagingly present, falls

for the fabulous Laura, peerless beyond the fatuity of her leucions: "Oh what a very sweet gentleman he is to make us poor ladies feel so esteemed." In the company of Lord Charles, a titled liah, and an enigmatic French professor, and under the all-seeing eye of Lieutenant Alias of the NYPD, they drift through a series of sub-Wedehousian jokes about KGB officials stuffing their faces with venison and caviar, wacky heiresses and English public schools. The ambience, customary in much of Donleavy's recent work, is distinctly *haute*: "not unamusing" White Russian counts, mummified, engemmed dewagers and drunken, impoverished lords rub shoulders in complete disregard of the way of the rest of the world.

Most disappointing is the language — a simpering, etiolated *schmelz* which fails to exorcise excesses of the "smooth firmness of her balletic alabaster limbs" kind. Unhappily, Donleavy permits himself to repeat "she let roll several big blue eyed tears down her rose-tinted cheeks to plummet on her bejewelled bosoms". All this is a long and not entirely satisfactory way from the cheery humpings, linguistic innovations and plonking *jole de vivre* of *Schultz*.

All the protagonists are more or less inexplicably enmeshed in a legend. They are the spiritual heirs of the fabled "Bangkok Boys", experts in their esoteric sport, who disappeared at sea on the day that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Their ill-fated motor cruiser *Hiyathere* was last seen steaming northwards from Long Island. The memory of these alumni is kept fresh by the only one of their number not on board at the time — Horatio De Alfonso Adams IV, filthy rich, known to his friends as The Fourteenth. PJ inherits from him the responsibility for ensnaring all that they stood for in the rules of De Alfonso tennis which, for all the cachet that its mastery confers, is not remarkable for its restrained use of colour: it is played on a green court with a purple and crimson net and a primrose ball. To the uninitiated or downright imperceptive it looks remarkably like badminton with a few... Given that "a bible of philosophical discussion" would be required to explain the tactical niceties, PJ contents himself with detailed accounts of "the nurt service", "zakes" and "el floppo" (a glossary is appended).

This simulated pedantry does little to animate conspicuous bad taste and a woeful fetishism. Because *De Alfonso Tennis* can be played by the infirm as well as the firm the rules include advice on the advisability of wearing a prothealon court, suggesting that it should be exalted for "stress factors, loose screws, springs, swivels and metal fatigue". Similarly, trusses should be double-checked. Large tits (ho ho) are a further hazard: the bra should therefore be of a seamless cotton which can provide a reliable skid free cradle for the bosoms". To describe this as comic invention might be stretching a point rather.

Fleeting selves

Brian Morton

CHAMBERMANT
Dancing Bear 250pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £8.95. 0 297 78482 X

As nature hates a vacuum, so "fate abhors a mystery". The mystery of Harry Newman's past leaves him with no more than a tentative identity. He himself is content to be simply a member of the human race, but others — his wife, colleagues, journalists, even his children — will not let him forget the unresolved questions of his life: who were his parents? Is he a Jew?

Some memories are clear enough. Old Dr Rhinar, the man he knows as grandfather, was chief doctor at a lunatic asylum in pre-war Latvia. There are other figures: an ailing grandfather, voluptuous Aunt Clara, Dr Apteker, the Marcovitches' memories of places and events, a dog running in a snowy field, a fire, a fairground bear. Do they add up to a single, continuous identity or is Harry's life, any life, merely a series of fleeting, disparate moments dictated by circumstance?

Empty vessels

Peter Kemp

ERICA JONG
Parachutes and Kisses 336pp. Granada. £8.95. 02469 12485

There are times in *Parachutes and Kisses* when you wonder if the book could be intended as scathing satire. Outstanding among them is a memento when it is announced that "One writes . . . for one's intimate pleasures: the pleasure of gazing some white statue of mind on paper, the pleasure of using one's gifts with language." For, devastatingly stacked round this claim are 336 emphatically unfigured pages in which Isadora Wing — Erica Jong's fictional alter egoist — does a little but hahle out bulletins about her cross states of mind and intimate sexual pleasures. Isadora, it emerges, has now separated from her husband, Josh, and been forced to endure "a year of unspeakable pain" — an ordeal so grim that the pills she's had to take to weather it have often left her mouth so dry "she couldn't talk, let alone give head". *Parachutes and Kisses* recounts how she battles on regardless to now levels of fulfilment.

At thirty-nine, Isadora is, we're told, "like a kid in her twenties"; she still possesses amazingly youthful looks (the product of Eve Arden facials, pricey hair-dos, health spas and "crazy designer clothes"). She's also retarded in ways that are more than skin-deep. Arch smut — "He's the Count of Cunnilingus, the Lord of Licks" — and a hearty way with disclosures about her sex-life make her resemble some over-excited college-girl.

Emblematic of the situation is the car Isadora drives: a silver Mercedes with "vanity plates in Middle English" proclaiming the word QUIM. Grinding QUIM around the country, Isadora is in her element, attracting attention by a mechanical display of would-be smart salacity (some people, she sniggers, don't even realize her number plates are brandishing a bit of bawdry). With QUIM, she sees herself as undertaking "a journey towards self-reliance" but all she ever arrives at is self-indulgence. It's a rare activity that Isadora can't reduce to narcissism. Reading a tribute to her grandfather at his funeral, she feels it's "self-revelatory". Eveo fellatio gets twisted into an exercise in self-gratification, as she thrills with "pride in her own skill".

The enormous ego at the centre of this story leaves little room for other characters: they're flattened two-dimensionally, with some ideotyping attributes crudely and repetitively pinned on to them: as with Cleely and her "big tits", Sophia and her "generous tits", Hepe and her "voluminous tits", or Lia and her "enormous, pendulous tits". With the book's men, attention focuses on what Jong likes to think of as "the faded organ". Encounters with varying shapes and states of it are glib-

glingly retailed. But, although a sexual gourmet — she leaves penis coated in guacamole; "zucchini" is a favourite nickname — Isadora sternly emphasizes that she also has a taste for higher things: "She could not love a cock . . . that had not read Shakespeare".

Throughout the twiddlings and twaddlings that constitute her sex-life, you're given to understand, she is in search of a partner who can satisfy both her physical and intellectual needs. Ultimately, she finds him in Bean, a tousle-headed twenty-five-year-old. Arousing her interest with remarks like "I merely thought you were an outrageously beautiful woman, and you turn out to be my very favourite author, too", he is gratifyingly overawed by her literary fecundity and uninhibited in his response to her sexual nipooses.

His veneration of her writing is particularly essential since, inhabiting a yapping literary ménage — she has three dogs: Virginia Woolf, Chekarf, and Dogstoyevsky — Isadora spends a great deal of time musing about her genius and the works (like her poems, *Vaginal Flowers*) that have stemmed from it. Scholarly as well as sensual, she has recently — like Erica Jong — produced a historical novel (it "made even her enemies grudgingly admit that she was a writer to be reckoned with"). Her writing, she reflects, is "really good". But, for such gifts, she has to pay a heavy price. Tax demands harry her; people recognize her in the street; men sexually fantasize about her, then turn out to be impotent when she warm-heartedly invites them to live out their dreams. The struggle to create can leave Isadora feeling "cosmically alone" — or tormented by the thought that "The writer is a vessel of the muse, and when nothing fills the vessel, the vessel wonders whether it exists or not."

This angst is only one instance of Isadora's more mystic side. She has occult orgasms: when making love, she sheds "give off blue light"; on cooeiving a child, she is favoured with a vision of a giant sperm pulsing a planet-sized ovum. Like-wise, feeling a strange affinity with her dead grandfather — an artistic genius — she's pleased to have his confirmed when his spectre appears to her in Odessa.

That is one of the few bright spots in what Isadora otherwise finds a nightmarish tour of Russia. Here, the pain of separation from Bean causes her such discomfort that, when visiting Babi Yar, she's almost overcome by a sense of her sufferings. Finally escaping, though, to "her spiritual home — Italy", she is able to display her mastery of the language ("*Quel buone fortune!*") and indulge her taste for fresh males and stale allusions. As she and Bean rollick in Venice in their mirrored suite at the Cipriani — "They made the love that Russia and his Effie could not" — she emits a gust of clichés about Byron and Casanova. Dismal as all this is, the book manages to end on an even more dispiriting note. After all her tribulations, Isadora reflects, "she was still alive".

Dr Rhinar who, a friend of the British Empire, has also been a card-carrying Nazi.

Her investigations yield papers and snippets of film that only deepen the problem. One clip shows the asylum and its staff, the child Heinrich, even the dancing bear, but no clue to Harry's parentage. They invoke only curiosity, no nostalgia.

Harry is an Oedipal quest, made of puzzles and fleeting relationships, uneasy, neurotic identifications that have little warmth or substance. The idea of "a past" is infinitely seductive. Harry is drawn despite himself by Sue Cohen, by Clara, by the black maid (a very obvious sexual trap), and (no less so) by the wayward daughter of the chairman of his bank. Yet in the end he shuts his eyes to all, tired by the searching on his behalf.

Dancing Bear is a mystery that continues to unfold without hope of final resolution. It makes a wry comment on a whole fictional genre. "I had no instinctive aversion to the dominant passwords of the age: roots, identity, heritage, and the dominant pastime: the search for self". In the end, "there is something to be said for mystery for its own sake, the retention of unexplored areas where the imagination can play".

Business in high places

Mary Goldring

ANTHONY SAMPSON
Empires of the Sky: The politics, contestations and world airlines 254pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £9.95. 034034931 X

At some point in the course of his researches, Anthony Sampson must have realized that airlines were not going to be as interestingly scandalous as the oil business or the other glittering international enterprises that he has written on in recent years. *Empires of the Sky* is an intelligently put-together, potted history of the flying business, a respectable enough piece of scholarship: but not the sort of hook that we have come to expect from Sampson.

This is because aviation is not his airt of industry. It is unsuitable. It attracts, indeed it seems to need, strong-minded showmen, from Juan Trippe to Sholto Douglas and Freddie Laker. But their horizons are narrow: they are clever in the way that foxes are clever but they do not on the whole seek power or political

manipulation. They simply want to run airlines. The physical isolation of airports cocoons them from the rough-and-tumble of ordinary business life. The economies of scale, the way aircraft double in size in each generation, send airline owners and managers in wild pursuit of the mass market. And the mass market is made up of ordinary travellers who, having taken the decision to trust their lives to something the size of a flying office block, want to do it at the lowest possible price. Sampson is at his best as the chronicler of motives in high places but the airline business is, as he admirably quotes Eddie Rickenbacker as saying, "hums on seats".

However, the prices of these seats are a recurrent scandal. Sampson is concerned with the symposium of governments and airlines and how governments became involved in the far-flung, capacity-limiting business, but he might have made more of this than he has done. It is, after all, only recently that a Japanese Prime Minister was convicted for accepting bribes to "persuade" the Japanese national airline to choose one jet rather than another.

The first air raid warning

David French

ALFRED GOLLIN
No Longer an Island: Britain and the Wright Brothers, 1902-1909 478pp. Heinemann. £18. 0434299022

Alfred Gollin seeks to tell two stories in this book. He begins by presenting a detailed account of the tangled relations which existed between various departments of the British government and the Wright brothers between 1902 and 1909. He concludes by illustrating how the British public were made "air-minded" even before Louis Blériot flew the Channel and proved once and for all that Britain was no longer an island.

No Longer an Island contains a good deal of trivia. Professor Gollin is never slow to take a well-aimed side-swipe at earlier historians from whom he has obviously learnt much but with whom he disagrees. He is particularly concerned to demonstrate that the Wright brothers were not prevented from selling their machine to the British government by what some of his predecessors have referred to as their almost paranoid obsession with secrecy. Until the end of 1902 the Wrights were free with the results of their experiments. But early in 1903, even before they achieved their first powered flight, they approached a patent attorney in order to protect their work. They were probably wise to do so. News of their achievements quickly attracted not only a host of competitors but also a number of unscrupulous scoundrels like Augustus Herring. Gollin argues that the Wrights were not only inventors of genius; they were also hard-headed businessmen. "They wanted to safeguard their secrets until they could sell what they alone had created and thus win for themselves the recognition and also the financial rewards they believed their genius, bravery, and devotion had earned."

Therein lay one of the clues to their strange relationship with the British government. The brothers immediately recognized the military potential of their invention and were determined to sell it to governments in preference to private individuals. They expected to get a better price that way and they also hoped that air power in the hands of governments would prevent future wars. Aircraft would be so destructive that no government would dare to expose its population to aerial attack and the cabinets and kings who were chiefly responsible for wars would themselves be liable to direct attack. The Wright brothers were not the last inventors who hoped that their engines of destruction would pave the way for peace. The concept of air-power as a deterrent against war can therefore be dated back to the very birth of the first aeroplane.

The Wrights created their own stumbling block when they tried to sell their machine to the British government. They had been brought up by their parents to be fiercely self-

reliant and suspicious of governments. They repeatedly insisted that, even before their representatives had seen a machine fly, the War Office should sign a "cooling-off contract". The British were to agree to buy a certain number of machines and in return the Wrights agreed to take part in performance trials. If their plans performed as well as the inventors had promised the British would be bound by their contract. If it did not the War Office was absolved from any obligations. The Wrights insisted on this because they were afraid that otherwise the British would simply inspect their plans, glean all the information they could from it, refuse to buy it, and decamp to England to use their newly discovered knowledge to build their own aircraft.

Gollin's description of the antics the Wright brothers and their agents used to attract the interest of the British are the most amusing part of the book. At one point they even stooped to employing the timid and imperious widow of a British general. It availed them nothing; she was Basil Zaharoff. The War Office's attitude was a mixture of cautious interest in the Wrights' work coupled with a disinclination to enter into a contract on their terms. For a long time they hoped to be able to build their own machine. To do so might be cheaper and it would also obviate the irritating necessity of admitting that the Americans were ahead of the British in a new field of technology.

Until 1906 the debate on the future of British aviation was conducted by a handful of experts and enthusiasts. But then the great press harem, Lord Northcliffe, witnessed one of the early flights of the Brazilian Alberto Santos-Dumont in France. Northcliffe was always fond of mixing patriotism with profit and he recognized a good story. He decided at once to make the British public air-minded lest other countries steal a march on them and expose Britain to the danger of aerial bombardment. Northcliffe and others were quick to take alarm at stories of the aerial achievements of the French and, more especially of the German Count Zeppelin. By 1908-9 the British and Germans were locked in the dreadought naval race, and parts of the British press were already carrying lurid fantasies warning of the danger of a German invasion from the sea.

The campaign mounted by Northcliffe and Unionist politicians like Arthur Lee to warn the public that Britain was apparently falling behind in the development of flying machines added a new dimension to the Anglo-German antagonism. Airships and aeroplanes might be able to by-pass Britain's traditional first line of defence, the Royal Navy, and deliver a crushing blow from the air. Many of the details in Gollin's book will probably only be of interest to specialist air historians. For other readers the most significant contribution he makes to our knowledge is to highlight the fact that in Britain the fear of a knock-out blow delivered from the air was already a generation old by the time it gripped the public imagination so profoundly in the 1930s.

Flying is such an integral part of any country's infrastructure that politicians cannot remain neutral. Most countries still have only one major airline. Frequently it is government-owned and, almost as frequently, not very efficiently run. But it is difficult to imagine circumstances in which a government would watch a national airline being driven out of business by foreign competition without intervening. And, even though airlines fly identical aircraft at identical fares under identical conditions, they could be driven out of business (Sampson disparagingly sees air travel as homogeneous though he would change his views if he ever has the misfortune to fly on a sub-standard airline). Given that some airlines make a profit where others make huge losses, governments of loss-making airlines have three options. They can cover the losses by subsidies; or they can sack the management, as happens periodically in Britain where a Tory minister once sacked both the chairman and chief executive of British Airways; or they can resist fare-cutting. Fares are (or were) ostensibly agreed within the framework of the International Air Transport Association but the IATA cartel has never been more than a fig-leaf worn by governments whose intentions were less than virtuous.

Enthusiasm for low fares is an expression of the economic health of an airline. The American government was a great promoter of low fares when American airlines were supreme in the 1950s and 60s. When the British, however, began to propose lower fares during a period of economic well being, the Americans were inexplicably hostile. Why? Sampson does not tell us, which is a pity because there are few writers with a better understanding of the devious ways of governments. Many of the misfortunes that brought once-great Pan American close to insolvency stemmed from wrong-guessing a presidential election and choosing a well-connected democrat to run the airline shortly before Nixon won his landslide Republican victory. The American government has now lifted

all domestic control on fares, and routes: controls on international services remain. A foreign airline would be unable to establish itself in America. And fares are still controlled on North Atlantic routes. Competition is not really full, free and unfettered within the United States.

In a generally low-keyed book, Sampson has permitted himself two set-pieces. One concerns the shooting down by the Russians of the Korean airliner and is based on an article he was commissioned to write at the time. The other is the story of the last days of Freddie Laker and whether he was or was not driven out of business by a conspiracy of his big competitors. No management allows an interloper to take as much of the market as Laker did without reacting; at the time of his bankruptcy he was the sixth biggest flight operator on the Atlantic route. So the others reacted.

Now another airline, People Express, has taken up where Laker stopped, with cheap fares and no frills. It flies, however, inside as well as outside the United States. If the big American internal airlines, like United or American, chose to close in now, they undoubtedly have the ability and the financial resources to obliterate People Express, even though common sense and the advice of their own lobbyists in Washington tell them it would be political suicide to do so.

It is this complex interplay of government and airlines that cries out for a subtle analysis but here Sampson confines himself to ridiculing such details as smile courses for cabin staff. But it does not seem so terrible to encourage manners among young women (and men) whose primal urge must be to treat their passengers like so many fat and fractious babies strapped in their high-chairs and grizzled for attention. The training of cabin staff is a recurring nightmare for airlines; even those sweet and silk-draped Asian girls, showing their profiles just as they do in the advertisements, are less docile than they look. But there is much more to the airline business than this.

Women's Studies from Princeton

The State and Working Women
A Comparative Study of Britain and Sweden
Mary Ruggie

In this lucid and controversial study of British and Swedish labor markets, anti-discrimination, and child care programs, Ruggie argues that policies for women must be developed within the context of mere general economic and social policies and not merely in terms of gender. C \$45.50. LPE \$14.50.

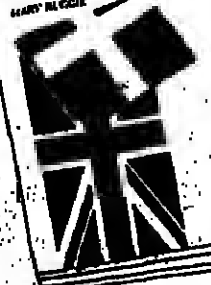
Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic
Steven Hause with Anne R. Kenney

This history of the women's suffrage movement in France during the Third Republic explains why the land of liberty and equality was one of the last countries to grant women the vote. C \$55.50. LPE \$18.00.

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THE STATE AND WORKING WOMEN
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
BRITAIN AND SWEDEN
MARY RUGGIE



John Coates

The Laird's fluctuations

Keith Walker

FRANK BRADY
James Boswell: The later years 1769-1795
609pp. Heinemann. £20.
0434 085308

The job is impossible, of course. How to write the life of a man who spent much of his adult life in a minute, honest, detailed and loving account of his actions and feelings? Especially when the fact of this record is the single most interesting thing about him, and led directly to his two great works, the *Tour* with, and the *Life* of, Samuel Johnson?

From time to time, Frank Brady implicitly laments his situation: "It would be intolerably tedious to record Boswell's wretched and endless fits of irresolution if he did not draw us into his alternations of pleasure and misery until they acquire some of the familiarity and obsessiveness of our own...". "It is the biographer's despair that Boswell's fluctuations in mood so faithfully resemble those found in many other lives...". At times he simply throws up his hands before the mass of material with an eloquent gesture: "Boswell summarizes his complaints better than a biographer can..."; or, two hundred pages later, "His journal tells the story better than any paraphrase."

By a nice twist, Brady's problem (and Brady's good fortune) was Boswell's, too. In the *Life of Johnson*, "The sheer quantity of Boswell's material, beginning with his massive journal, put fullness and exactness within reach". But was it any wonder that when Boswell started to sift this material he was, not for the first or the last time, near to the point of giving up, until Edmond Malone came to his rescue?

For some parts of his narrative the materials are so overwhelming that Brady is forced into heroisms of compression. Consider the journey to the Hebrides which Johnson and Boswell undertook in the summer of 1773. To say

there exist no less than six overlapping contemporary accounts: Boswell's journal, his published *Tour*, based on, but not identical with, this; Boswell's account in the *Life*, Johnson's *Journey*, Boswell's "Remarks" on this, and Johnson's letters to Mrs Thrale (filling over fifty pages in the collected *Letters*). To weave all these sources into a coherent and fresh narrative, while always bearing in mind that the whole event is a happening inspired by Boswell, produced by Boswell, and acted in by Boswell, is no small feat.

Sometimes the need for compression can have its amusing consequences, as when Brady says (what he cannot mean) that the island of Coll lacked a privy. Compression can distort, too.

Lochbuie was hospitable, however, and after supper he, Boswell, and Sir Allan each drank a bottle of port. Then came a social bowl of punch. Johnson, at this time an abstainer, went off to bed admonishing Boswell, "Don't drink any more punch." But Boswell, who must have been feeling the strain of the journey, reports, "I was seized with an aversion for drinking" and "slunk away from him, with a consciousness of my being brutish and yet a determination to go somewhat deeper." (This is the journal as confession.) Before they could start on the second bowl Boswell's stomach rescued him: he threw up. This is artful and amusing. But the colloquialism evades the fully blown pompousness (part of Boswell, too) of the circumlocution from the journal. Boswell had recorded:

But luckily before I had tasted the second bowl, I grew very sick, and was forced to perform the operation that Antony did in the Senatehouse, if Cicero is to be credited; so that Mr. Johnson's admonition to drink no more punch had its effect...

Another disadvantage Brady labours under is that the great bulk of the material on which he bases his book has been already published (eleven volumes so far) and lovingly annotated by his colleagues on the Yale Boswell project. Brady's spirits lift perceptibly towards the end, when he is freed from the dangers of treading on the toes of rival commentators.

The story begins in 1769, where Frederick A. Pottle's *James Boswell: The earlier years* had ended, with the marriage, on the same



Eighteenth-century wigs (after Rowlandson), from *All Illustrated Dictionary of Hairdressing and Wigmaking* by James Cox (312pp. Batsford. £20. 07134 42085).

day, of Boswell to his first cousin Margaret Mootgomerie, and his father Lord Auchinleck to his first cousin, Elizabeth Boswell. The two events were separated by some 200 miles. It was remarked when Pottle's volume appeared (1966) that such a concurrence of events would be surprising in any other life than Boswell's, but Boswell's marriage was anyway a gesture of defiance. His appalling father disapproved of Margaret because she was poor, as Boswell was to remain, more or less, for the rest of his life.

Boswell stayed in Edinburgh, at his law practice, which he resented and which was never to be crowned with success. He whored, drank, and begot children on his long-suffering wife for over a decade. Margaret, it should be said, emerges from Brady's account as a stroger and more sympathetic character than from some other recent treatments. The time was enlivened by spring visits to London, and punctuated by his long-running quarrel with his father, dour and mean, about an estate on Boswell's future estate. (Despite Brady's patient attempts at disentangling the details, they never become entirely clear, perhaps because the emotions involved - pride of family, and male succession - seem so utterly alien today.) Boswell had to fail at law because his judge father wanted him to succeed, so he chose to defend a succession of worthless but colourful characters at the criminal bar.

His father finally died in 1782, and Boswell became Laird of Auchinleck, a house to which his wife had not been invited for twelve years, and which his children had never seen. He was to receive a nasty shock. In view of Lord Auchinleck's frugality in the last years of his life (vividly detailed by Brady) Boswell fondly expected a substantial windfall. But "After paying Lord Auchinleck's debts, the trustees in 1784 completed their work by handing over what remained of his personal estate, about £43." And there were annuities, "a permanent charge on the estate" totalling some £300 a year. Meanwhile, Boswell established himself as an author with the *Tour to the Hebrides*, a new way of writing biography, and enormously successful. He was elated by the success of the *Tour*, but shaken by the remonstrances of those who felt they had been travestied. His distress was made worse, as Brady well brings out, by his reliance on precisely this audience and its values, for applause.

While his Scotch law practices declined to a trickle, he had visions (doomed to disappointment) of success at the English bar, to which he was called in 1786. This leads to his embroilment with Lord Lonsdale, a splendidly unspeakable character. In just about the only reward Boswell ever got from years of assiduously sucking up to the great and the good he was made Recorder of Carlisle, an episode which ended when he quarrelled with Lonsdale. Boswell moved to London, failed in law, and succeeded in biography. The rivalries between him and Mrs Thrale and with Sir John Hawkins are well retold. Edmond Malone, the midwife to the *Life of Johnson*, is the hero of the later stage of the narrative. It is disappointing, though, not to learn more of the waspish George Steevens, Malone's rival, who Nicholas Smith tells us would write notes on Shakespeare's bawdy passages "and sign them with the names of clerymen with whom he had quarrelled". In his last years, Boswell lost some of his reputation for lack of that more necessary and insidious of characteristics

"soundness". The *Life of Johnson* was a great success, he was parodied, and enjoyed a slight decline. He made the firm friendship of a Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Boswell came into contact with a huge number of extraordinary men, and was extraordinary in recording their conversations. This book teems with colourful characters and scenes, especially among the Lords of Session in Edinburgh. Strange that he should have found life there so dreary. One tittle is recalled by Brady, not from Boswell himself, but from Edinburgh folklore: the dying Lord Kames (Boswell had frequented his house with biographical intent), leaving the Court of Session for the last time, turns in the door and cries "his usual familiar tone, 'Fare ye weel, ye bitches'."

The central paradox of this man who devoted a lifetime to an enormous and minute record of his life, is that he recorded a life which wasn't ultimately worth recording. Part of Macaulay's famous indictment still sticks: There is not in all his books a single remark of his own literature, politics, religion, or society, which is not either commonplace or absurd. His observations on hereditary gentility, on the slave-trade, and on the entailing of landed estates, may serve as examples. To say that these passages are excellent would be to pay them an extravagant compliment. They have no pretence to argument, or even to meaning. He has reported innumerable observations made by himself in the course of conversation. Of these observations we do not remember one which is above the intellectual capacity of a boy of fifteen.

And so on through many anecdotes. Brady brushes Macaulay aside and deals with objections of this type by stressing how human Boswell was, and how much of Boswell there is in all of us, his extraordinary vitality and ability of experience apart.

One hostile voice remains, and here we must fault Brady's almost exclusive reliance on Boswell's viewpoint. There is a story related at second hand in Thomas Holcroft's posthumously published memoirs, which deserves to be given at length:

Lowe had requested Johnson to write him a letter, which Johnson did, and Boswell came in, while Lowe was writing. His attention was immediately attracted by Lowe took the letter, retired, and was followed by Boswell. "Nothing," said Lowe, "could surprise me more. Till that moment he had so entirely overlooked me, that I did not imagine he knew I was such a creature in existence; and he now accosted me with the most overstrained and inhuman compliment possible. 'How do you do, Mr. Lowe? I hope you are very well. Mr. Lowe, pardon my freedom, Mr. Lowe, but I think I saw my dear friend, Dr. Johnson, writing a letter for you.' - 'Yes, Sir.' - 'I hope you will not think me rude, but I'll tell you what I'll do for you, you would infinitely oblige me, if you would let me have a sight of it. Every thing from that hand, you know, is so inestimable.' - 'Sir, it is my own private affairs, but' - 'I would not pry into a person's private affairs, my dear Mr. Lowe.' Eventually, Boswell gets the letter, opens it, and walks away "as erect and as proud as he was half an hour before, and I ever afterwards won't let anyone else in on the act. To be sure the circumstances of Johnson's letter were humiliating for Lowe (who had asked Johnson to ask Reynolds to get a picture painted of him) and this may have coloured his reaction. Holcroft, Boswell's behaviour may, too, be seen as the necessary dispatch of a day's work by a single-minded in pursuit of material. After all, it is for the *Life of Johnson* that we value Boswell.

The self in so many words

John Sturrock

GEROME HAMILTON BUCKLEY
The Turning Key: Autobiography and the subjective impulse since 1800
191pp. Harvard University Press. £13.20.
0659 913302
A.O.J. COCKSHUT
The Art of Autobiography in 19th and 20th Century England
222pp. Yale University Press. £10.95.
0300 032358
SUSANNAH EGAN
Patterns of Experience in Autobiography
226pp. University of North Carolina Press. £18.95.
08078 15810

If studies of autobiography are now to arrive in droves, it can only be a sign that this two-faced genre, temptingly seated as it is on the railings that mark truth off from fiction, is the new hobby of the literary professoriat. That will be good for autobiography and bad for autobiographers, for the more we understand about what they are doing the less we shall be smitten by them as human beings. To study autobiography is to displace it, further from life, and nearer to literature; the contrivances of the writer outrank the experiences of the man and his efforts to singularize himself are cancelled out by the student's need to assimilate one autobiographical text to another, turning the singular back into a plural. And where the autobiographer offers himself as a whole, extended through time in the sequence of a narrative, the student wants only bits of him, this extract or that from his heartfelt story which will serve the student's own needs (or autobiography). Autobiographical writers suffer more than most by being broken up and run together with others of their kind.

The three academic authors here seem quarrelsome on this score; all three extract and assimilate heartily. They come at the subject with different priorities: Jerome Hamilton Buckley the most commandingly, as a literary historian strong on the English Romanticism and the late nineteenth century; A. O. J. Cockshut as something of a scold, giving marks to autobiographers less for what they wrote than for what they were; and Susannah Egan as a ritualist, looking to single out certain deep constants in autobiographical writing.

The best of the three books, Professor Buckley's, is so very polished that even when it is dwelling at its fastest, and intricate works are being bustled past us with only a few paragraphs spent on each, there is no obvious sense that worthy texts are being slighted. Buckley is modest in the early part of the book. He looks to be behind him into the eighteenth century to see where the roots of his "subjective impulse" may be, and produces the remarkable statistic that where there are on record twenty-five autobiographical works written by literary figures before 1800, 175 more such were published between then and the end of the century. It was the unprecedented subjectivism

of first Rousseau and then Wordsworth which taught writers that they could now cherish their selves publicly.

The subjective impulse once having been admitted to literature, Buckley follows its manifestations up into the present. The impulse, of course, has to be an inference from its literary effects; his is a psychological more than a formal history of autobiographical writing, inasmuch as it scarcely allows that subjectivism can also be the work of style rather than the predominant temper of the writer in question. Buckley's favoured exhibit is *The Preinde*, because of the balance there struck between "self and society": Wordsworth's mean, between an overdone introspection and a chronicler's flat recording of his times, is Buckley's own ideal, and when that balance is spilt, as in some recent "confessional" writing it certainly has been, he becomes censorious. After an excellent, tolerant section on the very stage autobiographer of the *fin-de-siècle* - Wilde, Gosse, the unquellable George Moore - he passes into the twentieth century, to find, ultimately, a new and unhealthy extreme of the subjective impulse in the poetry of Robert Lowell and the prose autobiography of Michel Leiris (the one French writer apart from Rousseau to appear in the book). Buckley does not care for Leiris' "self-loathing" but it is a pity he didn't look deeper into the elaborate and original justifications Leiris has provided for his volumes of autobiography, which are aesthetic as well as pathological: he wanted to extend the form and to reorientate it, and he has done both.

Leiris is a bad case of inattentiveness on Buckley's part, where the compressed format of his study tells against him. There are other cases: he misses the poignant tension in Beatrice Webb's *My Apprenticeship* between her girlish, leisured self-absorption and the virile (in those days) attractions of professional social science; and the morbidity of Darwin's short autobiography, written, so he suggested, by someone "as if he were already dead". Buckley nods now and again but he is generally a strong and encouraging literary guide, especially to the poets of the nineteenth century.

Mr Cockshut's book is deceptively titled: it is not about the art of autobiography as such, but about the evidence which autobiographers freely provide about their lives and societies. His concern is with history and with morals, not with the actual making of autobiographies. He ignores the complications which set in once one remembers that the autobiographer is a uniquely multiple figure, being writer, narrator and subject in one, and writing now about then. The very plain view of autobiography that Cockshut takes is too plain for his book's good. He begins with a chapter on three rakish, almost-but-not-quite autobiographers: Boswell; Harriette Wilson, a Regency tart with a smart line in incipits - "I shall not say why and how I became, at the age of fifteen, the mistress of the Earl of Craven"; and Byron. Boswell is fortunate to gain admittance to a study advertised as being of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but it soon becomes clear why Cockshut wants him. It is because the wayward

Scotsman was guilty in his Journals of an "uncritical inconsistency", a failing which Cockshut now corrects, by indicating places in Boswell's writing where his self-awareness lapses. The tactic is one Cockshut makes bold use of: Benjamin Robert Haydon he later finds to be "self-deluded", Stephen Spender reprehensible as an autobiographer for giving us an unclear picture of himself. These autobiographers let us down in Cockshut's terms; they have not got themselves quite straight.

This is an unusual, and I think, unsuccessful line to hold to about autobiography. Had Cockshut taken the actual writing of autobiography into account he would have found it hard to sustain the same conclusions. Since Boswell harps on his inconsistency he was presumably rather pleased about it, it being evidence of his great sensibility; safer to call his inconsistency insistent than "uncritical", when it is a topos of his autobiographical writing, and to judge it accordingly. The same with Haydon: since Haydon himself is the source of Cockshut's charge of "self-delusion", is not his hopeless grandiosity thereby turned into conscious play-acting and a mood of aggression against himself, a foretaste of the mood in which he later killed himself? And if Spender remains fuzzy to us in *World Within World* this can be adjudged to be artistry rather than delinquency; many of us feel ourselves to be fuzzy seen from inside, but it is not so easy to make oneself seem fuzzy from without, as in an autobiography, when the effects of writing are so largely definitive.

Cockshut's premises about autobiography are not flexible enough. He takes it that "true" autobiographers set out to answer the question "How did I become what I am?", but that is to foreclose on the whole adventure of writing an autobiography. Those who know what they are may well lack all incentive to do so. If there has to be just one motive for autobiography, better Benjamin Franklin's simple and dynamic one, that writing an autobiography is the nearest we can ever come to living a second time; or Stendhal's truly creative question: "What am I?" But if it narrows the modes and possibilities of autobiography down too much, *The Art of Autobiography* covers its chosen ground observantly and seriously, and makes useful mention of autobiographies many of us will not have read - Lord Bernal, Christopher Milne, Neville Cardus. Cockshut finishes with a section on narratives of religious conversion, and it is to this one feels his book has been tending all along. He looks on autobiography as an exercise in spiritual accountancy, hence his censure of those whose book-keeping in this respect is less than complete. His own book would have had a sharper focus, and a stronger sense of organization, had it laid down the religious theme at the start and followed it through explicitly.

Patterns of Experience in Autobiography is the most ambitious of these books, and the most flawed. Susannah Egan's theme is "fictionalization", or the way in which mythical patterns influence the autobiographer's life-story. That one person's autobiography is in

some measure everyone's is the argument she is putting up, and which also supports by ingeniously gathered facts of comparative mythology. As is their way, however, universal patterns turn out to be weak determinants of particular texts, and Egan has to exaggerate in order to convince us of her chosen autobiographers' mythical credentials. It will hardly do to write of De Quincey's admittedly momentous defection from Manchester Grammar School in the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* in terms of an expulsion from Eden, when he chose to leave school because he didn't like it there. Egan makes overfree similarity with categories like "conversion" or "descent into Hell". Were Wordsworth or Carlyle ever converted, exactly? Did even Augustine "descend into hell" on his way to Christian belief?

The book's happiest parts are those more empirical ones where she compares the accounts given of certain episodes of an autobiography with alternative accounts of the same episodes given by the same writer elsewhere: William Hale White's *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* for example, with the small book he published thirty years later with his own name attached to it, *The Early Life of Mark Rutherford*; and Newman's account in the *Apologia* of his crucial sickness on a visit to Sicily written many years after the event, with the account he provided in letters written at the time. Egan thus raises the curious question of verification in autobiography, which we normally leave unraised. It is proper, as its readers, that we should take an autobiography on trust: it is not strictly verifiable even in principle, for where is the *hors-texte* by alignment with which we can set about falsifying it? When Egan uses Hale White's *Early Life* to "correct" *The Autobiography* she is setting text against text and has to take Hale White's word for it that the first is more strictly truthful than the second even though he could have had reasons for wanting to retract certain things in *The Autobiography* because they were true, not because they weren't. And Newman's letters are not necessarily the less "literary" for being written so much closer to the event, as a rough draft for the subsequent *Apologia*, so to speak; indeed given that they were written for a particular person rather than for a hypothetical congregation, they could be more imaginative rather than less. Egan raises more problems than she seems to realize in her attempt to measure fiction against fact, when the facts too turn out to be textual.

Patterns of Experience in Autobiography is undone by her failure to recognize that the raw material of autobiography, the writer's experience, is inaccessible. Her own irrepressible romanticism is to blame. She writes of the autobiographer having to "translate" the "rhythms of life" into narrative without noticing that if life has rhythms it has already been translated, that this raw material is already partly cooked. Her "patterns of experience" may be assessed more lucidly as the conventions of narrative itself, both mythical and non-mythical, and irrespective of whether they have some universal origin in human biology.

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(987)

Aspiring to abstraction

Stuart Hampshire

JONATHAN BENNETT
A Study of Spinoza's Ethics
405pp. Cambridge University Press. £30
(paperback, £9.50).
0521 258677

This book ought to transform and re-vivify the study of Spinoza in English. Jonathan Bennett proceeds methodically through the *Ethics* from beginning to end, expounding, comparing and criticizing as he goes; only very rarely, and always with an apology, does he skip a passage because he finds it uninteresting or unintelligible or both. He dismisses the geometrical structure of the *Ethics*, and the apparatus of demonstration and corollary, as not a serious guide to the order and validity of the arguments in the *Ethics*; and he is surely right. At the same time he is unwilling to allow Spinoza at any point to claim conclusions which he has not justified by argument. This bristly, non-nonsense attitude is very useful, if only because a tone of selective piety is apt to creep into most commentaries on Spinoza, and questions of justification are then glossed over. Professor Bennett has shown himself to be a specialist in the "Show Me" approach to the great philosophers of the past, notably in his work on Kant. His plain-man style is pleasantly incongruous when applied to Spinoza's aloof generalities. Quite often he dismisses the specific metaphysical and moral claims of Spinoza as absurd and even crazy, while always insisting that there is much to be learnt from Spinoza at his best. One cannot doubt the dedication and the rational respect which have inspired the many years of research which this book represents. It brings Spinoza down to earth and close to contemporary concerns.

I think that at some points Bennett's interpretation of Spinoza is wrong, and that there are three clear and related reasons why he goes wrong. The first is that he has too little regard for Spinoza's theory of knowledge and for the distinction between the different attainable levels of knowledge on which the whole theory of liberation depends. Perhaps a good way to expound the *Ethics* to modern readers would be to begin with this distinction, and then to show the metaphysics of the First Part, and the ethics of the last two Parts, as dependent upon the theory of knowledge. Second, Bennett does not consistently cling to the crucial distinction between the intellectual order of things and the common order of Nature; and without this distinction Spinoza does indeed look like a rather crazy Laplacean determinist, who has a Stoic belief in the power of reason to replace feeling and sentiment.

Third, Bennett will not abandon the unquestioning realism of British empiricists, who assume that our minds are designed to reflect Nature, completely or incompletely, successfully or unsuccessfully. But the point of Spinozism is precisely that our minds are not designed to reflect Nature, but rather to register the effects of limited aspects of Nature upon us.

and, secondly, to recognize these limitations; and this recognition is the service of philosophy. When we are thinking about mathematics, we knew that in recognizing its truths we do not need to make allowances for our particular place in the natural scheme of things, and for the distortions which result. But this advantage entails a high cost in abstraction. The trick is to combine in our thinking a high level of impartiality between particular points of view with concrete reference to human concerns; and this is a matter of correcting thought, not of controlling the will, as Bennett says.

Lastly, most of Bennett's severe criticisms of Spinoza employ a notion of proposition, each type with its appropriate origin and status, which was unacceptable within Spinoza's philosophy: familiar to us and familiar to Descartes, but explicitly rejected by Spinoza. In place of types of proposition we are instructed by Spinoza to think of the levels of thought and of active understanding that are accessible to human beings, who are finite creatures surrounded by the infinities of Nature. In mathematical reasoning, and in any thought that comes close to this model, we have glimpses of a clear understanding of reality, and we must extend this style of thought to the governance of public and private life as far as we can; and in the nature of things it can never be very far. Spinoza claims that the very same proposition, with the same reference and the same predicate, conveys a different thought in the mind of a systematic thinker and in the mind of a victim of common sense.

To stick with the logical assumptions and methods of analytic philosophy, as Bennett does, is to condemn Spinoza from the start; Spinoza has a vision of knowledge which rejects many of the common-sense categories upon which analytical philosophy operates. But Bennett is unrelentingly clear, thorough and fereful in his exposition of the most obscure parts of the *Ethics*, and no student of Spinoza can fail to profit from the commentary, however addicted to Spinozism and uncommitted to analytical philosophy he may be. As might be expected, Bennett is particularly

helpful when explaining and expanding Spinoza's sketch of a theory of the physical world. There is an excellent discussion of the notion of substance and of Spinoza's distinctive use of it. He is least helpful when criticizing Spinoza's account of the transformation and re-direction of the emotions and of the gain in independence and detachment which is supposed to follow this transformation. Robust common sense tells Professor Bennett that no such transformation occurs, or is likely to occur, in his real world by the driving force of reason, as Spinoza suggests that it can, and he doubts that we are able, even in imagination, to step into Spinoza's real world, which is composed of mathematical relationships and rational arrangements of forces and counterforces. At the end of the book, and recalling the many new insights that it contains, I still believed that a stronger case could be made for Spinoza's theory of knowledge, and even for the hope of human improvement based upon it, than is made here. But there is no clearer and more careful statement of the case against Spinoza's rationalism from the standpoint of empiricism.

judgment of Spinoza's system and grasped, incidentally, Goethe also did, its most pregnant elements: the non-anthropomorphic conception of God, the theory according to which moral action remains meaningful even in a deterministic context, and the concept of *amor*, which, rich and complex as it is, founds an essentially monistic philosophical rationalism. The only real weakness of the book occurs in the discussion of the question of the immanence or transcendence of God in Spinoza and Herder. It may be correct and understandable to identify in Herder a theoretical effort to unify immanence and divine transcendence, and to trace this both to a lingering attachment to religious orthodoxy, and, perhaps, to an unconscious attempt to invoke the purification of Spinoza's atheism by Mändelssohn and Lessing; but it is certainly objectionable to present the Spinozan *Deus sive natura* with any least transcendence.

No doubt can be left, however, the apprehension of Spinoza was radically reoriented through Lessing, Herder and Goethe; and, as Bell shows in his concluding chapters, the age of Weimar Classicism had learnt fully the lesson of Spinoza's leading ideas: determinism, naturalism and a new rationalistic approach to morals.

Fogou

We are watching the sky in a certain quarter
For the look of iron. The house we leave
May be hospitable with the smell of baking bread
When we enter the ground again at the ferny hole.

What pity we shall extend into the sunlight
For our molested rooms, and what rank fear
That men will come prospecting with crowbars
Or slip in dogs at the mouth of our shorn hill.

The cold or fire; or to be sat out
By hunger; or as at Trehowle
Where there were grave finds: a doll,
A photograph, the family loving cup.

At Pendeen something unspeakable
Must have happened to the woman of the house.
She appears in winter in a white dress
Biting a red rose.

DAVID CONSTANTINE

Fogou (Cornish): an underground passage and cave used as a hiding-place for valuables and people.

Promising Edwardians

Lewis Foreman

STEPHEN LLOYD
H. Balfour Gardiner
272pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50.
0521 256097
MONICA WATSON
York Bowen: A centenary tribute
112pp. Thames Publishing. £6.50.
095210247

To an Edwardian commentator on the British musical scene the young composers Balfour Gardiner (born 1877) and York Bowen (born 1884) must have appeared to be very hot tips as future "big names". Indeed Gerald Finzi once declared: "If we had tried to back a winner among the young men who were here between 1870-80, one would have backed Balfour Gardiner before Vaughan Williams and Holst." It was 1910 before *A Sea Symphony* and the *Tallis Fantasia* presented Vaughan Williams as a name to count; while it was to fall to Gardiner himself to help launch Holst as a major figure, financing the now legendary private run-through of *The Planets* in 1918. Earlier, Gardiner, with his two celebrated series of concertos, helped launch—between 1912 and 1914—not only Holst, but Bax, and to a lesser extent

Leading ladies

Michael Tanner

RUPERT CHRISTIANSEN
Prima Donna
367pp. Bodley Head, £15.
0130305507

This book's subtitle is "A History", and the text claims that Rupert Christiansen has put the lives and art of the great prima donnas "into the context of operatic and cultural history". A bold notion, and if the book fulfilled it, it would be not only a miracle of compression but a help in understanding an important element in the social history of the West during the last 300 years. It doesn't fulfil it, or even really try to, though occasional gestures are made in that direction. Still, it is a continuously absorbing, smoothly written and moderately well-informed book. But I can't see it doing much to enlighten those who already know a good deal about opera, or ridding those who don't of their likely prejudices. Though to his credit Christiansen doesn't, as nearly every writer of general works on opera does, misquote Dr Johnson to the effect that "opera is an exotic and irrational entertainment", in large part his book seems to be a sermon with that as text, and the behaviour of prima donnas an especially blatant manifestation of exotic irrationality. No doubt he is right, in that it has been characteristic of them, and just as much of their male counterparts (for the purposes of this book, by the way, castrati are treated as women) to be temperamental, vain, egotistic and prone to hysteria and collapse. Of all the performing arts opera is the most susceptible to hideous contingencies, and thus the most likely to produce sensational copy.

At a high level, Christiansen's book is journalism, and for all his concern with other aspects of prima donna-hood, he is most at home narrating colourful and scandalous incidents. When he essays something general, as for instance in setting the scene for a discussion of a particular composer's leading interpreters, he tends to be slapdash and bemusingly superficial. On Wagner he says that "A sickly sort of Christianity, sado-masochistic eroticism, and an idealization of the female pervade *Tristan* or *Parzifal*". The "or" helps to make this unclear, but one would hardly think that *Tristan* idealized one sex at the expense of the other, or that either of the lovers was a sado-masochist; and it is astonishing to find Christiansen referring to "the spiritual beauty that should shine forth from Kundry in particular". Nor is it true that Wagner wrote to "Mathilde Wesendonck during rehearsals that 'This *Tristan* is turning into something dreadful'". That is said in a letter he wrote while composing Act III, years before there were any rehearsals. That kind of inaccuracy is fairly frequent, and makes one

the concept of the British composer as one to be taken seriously. Other beneficiaries from the concertos included Delius, Grainger (neither perhaps strictly British), Austin, Vaughan Williams, O'Neill, Harty, W.H. Bell, McEwen, Bantock, and, not least, Gardiner himself. A small but valuable feature of Stephen Lloyd's definitive book on Gardiner is the lists of the music played in these eight historic programmes. Lloyd is particularly useful for his encyclopaedic knowledge of what was played and when, and for all those details of works announced and not played or the subject of last-minute substitutions.

For the student of the history of music in England since 1900 there is a core of essential literature, of relevance to almost every facet of the period. This study of Balfour Gardiner is a valuable addition to that select company, and is especially useful because of his central place in the earlier history of the period, and of the author's wide-ranging treatment which makes it an evocation of the times as well as a portrait of a man and his music (with some superb early photographs).

York Bowen was never part of the circle which revolved around Gardiner, and around the Royal College of Music, nor yet, on the other hand, round Bantock and the provincial centres. Others of Gardiner's friends were

uneasy about the large amount of gossip the book contains.

About half the book is devoted to singers of whom there are no recordings, so Christiansen has to rely on contemporary reports of what they were like; he manages this frustrating task well, so that we feel that we have a good idea of how, for example, the great Giuditta Pasta, creator of the part of Norma, sounded. Everything suggests that she was remarkably similar to Callas; she elicited the same kind and even degree of enthusiasm, and her vocal imperfections, often turned to dramatic effect, are also, as recounted in detailed critiques, highly reminiscent of Callas's. Christiansen is not reliable about Callas; banally stating that she was only really at home in tragedy. "To wastful lyricism (her *Sonambula* is too earnest) or tearful melancholy (for which we listen to Muzio), let alone comedy, she was less well suited". But has he heard her Rosina or Floria, brilliant comic performances; or the first record she made, *Qui la voce*, the quintessence of testful melancholy, making Muzio sound slightly coarse? Naturally these judgments are disputable, but by stating his in a history Christiansen imparts to them an official quality which they don't and can't possess.

To read that "the last Melba night before the outbreak of the First World War was attended by two kings, four queens, and a dowager empress" is to be amazed by, among other things, how many kings and queens were around at the time, how they liked to spend their time, and what status a singer such as Melba could achieve. A book which devoted itself more single-mindedly to their place in society would be of more value than this skillfully wrought collection of anecdotes. For the assessment of singers we have the monumental *The Grand Tradition* by John Steane, and the ongoing series of volumes *The Record of Singing* by Michael Scott, both extremely contentious, but at least provoking one to listen more carefully and judge more scrupulously.

Dent have recently reissued two titles from their Master Musicians Series: *Tchaikovsky* (194pp. £4.95: 0 460 02187 7) by Edward Garden which has corrections to the earlier editions and up-dated material, especially concerning the circumstances of Tchaikovsky's death, and *Vivaldi* (274pp. £4.95: 0 460 02282 2) by Michael Talbot. The TLS reviewer wrote in the issue of November 30, 1979 that the series "continues to provide reliable guides; even though they are generally too short for major composers... Edward Garden was the first to break the mould; in his excellent Tchaikovsky volume in 1973 [and] Michael Talbot tries a compromise by opening with a study of the rediscovery of Vivaldi and a very useful chapter on Vivaldi and his music... as a bird's-eye view... this is an excellent piece of work".

among Bowen's well-off contemporaries, those talented pianist-composers who were students of Corder and Matthay at the Royal Academy of Music. While a student Bowen was pre-eminent in this company, as both composer and pianist, and the gossip-columns of Society papers around 1904 were suitably gushing in their accounts of his youthful achievements. Yet Bowen played little part in the emergence of a national musical identity, which was characterized by a succession of strong musical personalities, with instantly recognizable individual styles. Bowen never commanded such individuality, and although a productive composer—Monica Watson's book contains a sixteen-page catalogue of his music—he never produced a score that would keep his name before the public. His reputation as a significant composer did not really survive the First World War, yet his output contains many attractive works, and it is unfortunate that in his centenary year so little has been done to give us a chance to evaluate it—particularly his orchestral music—in performance. The last time one of his symphonies or piano concertos was broadcast by the BBC was in 1959. So Miss Watson's short memoir is a useful reminder of how inadequately he has recently been treated, perhaps most unfortunately by the inaccurate entry in the *New Grove*.

Bowen was a working musician. Gardiner was sufficiently wealthy never to have to be so, and ultimately this led him to throw up music altogether in favour of forestry, although continuing to support composers he favoured—including Delius—with discreet philanthropy. Our view of him is conditioned by the fact that being affluent he allowed himself too much opportunity for self-doubt and so destroyed the larger part of his work. A quick count in Stephen Lloyd's book reveals twenty works with orchestra that do not survive, and only fourteen which do. When one considers such fine short scores as the fervent choral setting of *April* and the ravishingly poetic evocation *A Berkshire Idyll*, one feels that those which do

survive should be brought to the attention of conductors sympathetic to their idiom: even now *A Berkshire Idyll* has only been played twice and never broadcast in Britain. Since detailed analytical notes survive for many of the works Gardiner destroyed it is possible to get at least some of their flavour. We can say of him, as we cannot of most of his contemporaries, that if he had died in the First World War we would remember him as a more substantial composer than we do.

Performances of Gardiner's music in his centenary year resulted in a sympathetic evaluation of his surviving music. Bowen, on the other hand, with a much larger oeuvre, has not been sufficiently performed in his centenary year for an assessment to be made. Many clues to his aesthetic do not augur well; for example his cadenzas for Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, which he plays in his pioneering 1926 recording of the work, are grotesque, and revealing in a way he certainly did not intend. Yet tape recordings of orchestral works surviving from 1950s broadcasts are much more encouraging, as was a performance of the *Festil Overture* at the RAM earlier this year.

It is curious that Gardiner, the product of a late-nineteenth-century Frankfurt musical education, became, under the influence of folksong and Delius, a quintessentially English composer of his time, while Bowen, who never studied abroad, has a much less personal idiom. Yet in the event neither the "Frankfurt Gang" (which, besides Gardiner, included Scott, Quilter, O'Neill and Grainger) nor the composition students of Corder at the RAM, both generally considered at the time to be forward-looking and abreast of the latest developments, had the strength of purpose or the staying power of their colleagues at the RCM. Whether this strength and personality derived from Stanford's teaching or was the result of some other factor is the most interesting question still outstanding. Meanwhile these two books add further to our appreciation of the period.

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Thinks

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American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* was, by any standards, the literary and commercial success of the year in America. Reviewers all marvelled at the appearance of what one called, with charming surprise, "that rarest of literary blossoms: a page-turner about ideas". The airport bookstalls were bowed with this blossom, as were the coffee and cocaine tables of the semiotic-in-crowd. *The Name of the Rose* could be read as a detective story, as a medieval romance, as a linguistic and textual romp or as what it actually is, which is a satire on the persistence of faith in the modern world. Some readers also claimed to have found contemporary Italian politics encoded, as it were, in the text. There have been tremendous and even acid guessing games about the provenance of the title. Now, with Eco himself as a visiting teacher in New York, he has become the lion of the season. And Harcourt Brace Jovanovich have published his *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, which carries the teasing and ambiguity of the original to a new stage.

On October 24, PEN were the hosts of a public "conversation" between Eco and Susan Sontag at New York University. The guest author proved to be mercurial and ludic, treating all questions and queries as an opportunity to show off. His preferred manner is self-deprecation, and his method is *epitaph*. "From the point of view of literature", he said, "my book is not written at all. But to write a novel is not a problem of language. It is a cosmological problem." Unlike a poet, it seems, the novelist must invent a world. The audience listened humbly, afraid that it might have missed something. Susan Sontag gantly suggested that Eco had followed the lineage of Roland Barthes - from student of popular culture to art critic to semiotician - but had made the transition to novelist that Barthes never accomplished. Eco replied that Barthes was so much a perfectionist that he could never have written a novel. This assertion, at least, the strength of being unfalsifiable. Added to a later assertion, that Descartes employed the methods of Holmes and Hitchcock for his *cogito*, it had the desired effect of producing uneasy laughter.

Eco is a keen student of pop culture, and likes to keep his hearers off-balance with rapid changes of pace. He will make solemn remarks about the cultural import of Superman or James Bond; break into a speculation about Pansini and sexuality, and then describe one of his many *pastiche*s. (The Wittiest of these is *Novita*, in which the teller of the tale confesses that he can only desire grandmothers over eighty. The narrator is Umberto Eco.) This style is naturally hyperbolic. When Susan Sontag patently takes him at his word, asking if a great novel can indeed be ill-written and offering Dreiser's *American Tragedy* as an example, Eco replies grandly that "many of the most vital and moving books in world literature have been poorly-written." Which ones? He does not care to say. It would be too literal, too Anglo-Saxon, to expect an answer. The *Postscript* is similarly frivolous. There is an aphoristic carelessness at work. "The author should die once he has finished writing: So as not to trouble the path of the text." A few pages later, we learn that Snoopy and Woody Allen are looking over his shoulder of the narrator.

1327 was a good year for laying down your unclad emperors, and for discouraging on the Apocalypse. Biblical prophecies of Armageddon are becoming a staple of polite discussion here, with even the President free-associating on the matter, and this may explain some of Eco's appeal. But he scorns all modern analogies with his work, while admitting that the reader may be allowed to see meanings which elude the writer. Karl Meyer holds the palm for proposing that since a *Rose* by any other *Name* would smell as sweet, and since the echo returns us to the world of Italian political fiction, the author's disclaimer of a Shakespearean influence may be a deliberate feat.

Every attentive reader of the *TLS* will find, I am sure, that he or she feels the gap left by Professor Stephen Koss. It is a convention to

refer to early deaths as tragic, but this instance makes the convention seem rather stale. Stephen was so obviously a historian and critic in his prime, and so clearly a writer approaching his mature best, that the sense of waste and loss is crushing. This emotion was apparent at his memorial meeting, which heard from R.K. Webb, editor of the *American Historical Review*, as well as from Ved Mehta, from Stephen's distinguished Columbia colleague Ainslie Embree and from one of his students. Stephen was very much a Columbia man, respected and liked far beyond the confines of his own discipline.

More than any other professional in that discipline, Stephen knew and relished England. He would not have renounced the title of "anglophile", but he did not romanticize or idealize his favourite subject. His works, on the classic English liberals and on the English press, were at once clear-sighted and scapital. His industry was renowned, but no one who knew him could call him solemn. He was a scrupulous man, who always had time for inquiries and appeals. And, though he could be self-parodic about his absorption in the vanished spaces of the Edwardian age, he was very serious in his application to the grand problem of liberalism and Empire. He will be missed by many who never met him.

Kingsley Amis's most recent novel, *Stanley and the Women*, has not been able to find a publisher in New York. This is odd in itself when one thinks of how many admirers he has here; odder still when one remembers how much garbage is on the current fiction lists. Embarrassed publishers have been heard to say that there are "problems" about publishing *Stanley*. When pushed, they more or less admit that there is a "prejudice" against the book. Nobody could object to "prejudiced" reviews of it, but prejudiced non-publication is another matter. In order to be frank, I shall state the obvious and say that there are influential feminists in publishing who believe that the reading public should be spared certain fictions. Mr Amis's agent, Jonathan Clowes, tells me that four senior editors at different publishing houses have enthused about the novel and offered to take it. Three of them candidly

excused the rescinding of such offers by reference to objections from feminists on the editorial board: in the remaining case Mr Clowes suspects this to have been true.

In other words, American readers are being cheated of the chance to get hold of a good book. A start is being made by *Grand Street*, the quarterly, which is giving a long review to *Stanley and the Women* regardless. Perhaps this will shame others into following suit. But is there no publisher who will step forward to save the honour of the trade?

On election day, and therefore unnoticed by the newspapers, the Supreme Court heard arguments in a case which could well decide the relationship between journalism, publishing, copyright and the First Amendment. The plaintiffs were the publishers Harper and Row and the *Reader's Digest*, and the defendant was *The Nation* (to which, I had better say, I contribute a column). The milling group outside the usually torpid courtroom was like a first-night crowd.

In 1979, *The Nation* was sent an advance copy of the memoirs of President Gerald Ford. Entitled *A Time to Heal*, the manuscript contained admissions by Ford which were of the first importance in testing various claims about the Nixon pardon and the legitimacy of the Watergate succession. There seemed every justification, in the public interest, for publishing an article based on the disclosures. Harper and Row are suing for infringement of copyright and for the sum which they say they forfeited in "exclusive serialization" fees. So far, the Court of Appeals has upheld *The Nation's* position on grounds of free speech and the public interest. And *amicus curiae* briefs have been filed, in favour of this verdict, by the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Review of Books* and *Scientific American*. The briefs were written by Professor Melville B. Nimmer, whose *Nimmer on Copyright* is the comprehensive standard work on the subject. The American Association of Publishers has filed a brief on the opposing side.

According to Floyd Abrams, the country's leading First Amendment advocate, a Supreme Court finding for the plaintiffs would be a

severe blow to free inquiry and publication, because it would forbid the quotation or even the paraphrase of copyrighted material. It would also mean that presidents and other public servants were in some sense the "owners" of the periods of history in which they featured.

This is the first major case to involve a conflict between the law of copyright and the constitutional guarantee of free speech. Precedents are therefore few. There may be hope in a Supreme Court decision of last year, which ruled that it was not an infringement of copyright for a citizen to use a Betamax for the taping of a film. Perhaps what holds good for entertainment will also hold good for public debate.

Norman Mailer seems to be in an odd mood. His recent trip to the Soviet Union produced an article, in *Parade* magazine, which, by mixing the obvious and the non-sequitur, achieved naivety. As he wrote, Russia is indeed "a huge and complex beast of a nation, a land difficult to live in, abrasive as steel wool". As he also wrote, it is "nonetheless a real country where people do not necessarily decide in advance that they are working for a doomed and evil machine but instead grow up suffering and scheming, looking for better ways and means to live well and fornicate well, and even go bowling and play ball like thee and me".

The suspicion that all this "land of contrasts" folkiness is leading us somewhere is enhanced when Mailer writes that, "It is significant that we have forgiven Nazi Germany for its concentration camps - and the 20 million people that the Nazis exterminated - we do great business with Germany - but we still do not exculpate the Russians for their gulags." There seems to be a category mistake here, unless one believes that "Germany" and "Nazi Germany" are coterminous. And who are, or who is, the forgiving "we"? It might not matter that Mailer himself says foolish things about the Soviet Union, where active persecution of writers, unlike in Germany, still going on. But now that he is President of American PEN, which is supposed to defend such writers, he really should be more careful.

do with the real guerrilla leader as described in Karari Njama's *Mau Mau from Within* - the source to which Ngugi himself pays tribute. The Kikuyu women who went with the Land and Freedom Army carried babies on their backs, not guns; they didn't wear Cuban-style camouflage fatigues and they didn't join in male discussions on terms of equality - or on any terms. Some of the Rift Valley settlers were no doubt half-way to cartoon caricature, but surely not quite so far as the cardboard cut-outs offered by Wazalandu Players.

Nevertheless the arrival here of *Dedan Kimathi* seven years after it was first presented in Nairobi, then hastily closed down by the authorities, is a most welcome event. Ngugi's depiction of the black educated classes clamouring to sell out their guerrilla brothers is both incisive and witty. "Haven't we already won? So why not surrender?"

The first issue of a new magazine *Imaginaire: International Chicano poetry journal*, edited by Tino Villanueva (Volume I, no 1, Subscription \$8 per annum, from 645 Beacon St, Suite 7, Boston MA 02215, USA) contains an interview with Gabriel Garcia Márquez, for which Tomás Stefanovics admirably rejected offer of book and tape recorder, the interviewer's usual tools. The result, which he describes as "a collage of his ideas and my impressions", succeeds best in the latter category, but it is an authenticity which is out of reach of the question-answer format. Márquez - who described his *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* as a "false report of a real crime" - approved, presumably. The rest of the magazine is taken up, mainly by poetry, written in Spanish, English, and sometimes a mixture of both.

The most stimulating event of the conference was the Wazalandu Players' production of Ngugi's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, an epic and episodic drama about the Mau Mau uprising of the early 1950s. Cloke to pure agit-prop in style, manicured in mood, the play offers us a romanticized, ahistorical view of the Kikuyu struggle against British colonialism. The hero Dedan Kimathi of this production has little to

Letters

Private Archives

Sir, - Roy Foster's judicious comments (November 9) on the melancholy contrast between some private and some public archives will have warmed the heart of many a baffled researcher. Some would want to go further, and state baldly that any private restriction of access to the papers of statesmen is intolerable, while the sale of such papers to foreign archives - which seems to be occurring more frequently - is a national scandal. These records cannot be treated as private property, capable of enriching the descendants of those who have pursued political careers. These men may have done the state some service, but they are not entitled to perjure their records (or indeed its tin trunks). The inextricable entanglement of the "private" and "political" domains, which Dr Foster deftly demonstrates, means that public men must not expect to preserve the distinction. This is, surely, the price of power. It is scarcely possible to believe that politicians would have been, or will be, deterred from the pursuit of office by the knowledge that their private lives will become public property.

The best that can be said for private archives (and it is no small thing) is that they can preserve what officialdom destroys. The wanton destruction and blatant censorship by government departments of records due for deposit in the Public Record Office constitutes a long-standing and continuing assault on democracy and freedom of information. Whitehall, as one of your reviewers recently pointed out, sees the historian's pursuit of truth as inconvenient at best, at worst subversive. The obsession with official secrecy is the most malignant "British disease".

C. J. N. TOWNSEND.
Department of History, University of Keele, Keele, Staffordshire.

The Oxford Authors

Sir, - The favourable observations of your reviewer W. W. Robson on individual volumes of the Oxford Authors series (October 26) have been received with great gratification. However, his study of the titles reported to be in preparation has led him to make inferences that are incorrect. The list upon which he comments consists of titles already under contract when the present volumes went to press. It is not easy to see how Professor Robson came to see this list as an attempt to revise by exclusion the canon of English literature; but he may be relieved to learn that more titles are to follow. The Marconita peril is, in short, illusory. FRANK KERNODE.
21 Laund Road, Cambridge.

Freud and the Seduction Theory

Sir, - In his review of my book *The Assault on Truth* (July 6) Frank Cioffi states that "Freud accepted a dubious theory because he was anxious to bring himself to the attention of the medical world and he abandoned it from belated circumspection". This does not represent a fact, however, but only a speculation (based, as far as one can tell, on no new documents of any kind, or any new information, simply on Professor Cioffi's statement). This is the tone of the entire piece. Cioffi simply asserts that something is so, and feels no obligation to provide any kind of documentation.

But I am not writing to respond to the review as such but to point out two errors, both serious, in the review, and which can be checked by anybody who takes the trouble to do so. Cioffi writes: "Another consideration which reinforced [Freud's] belief in their reality [ie. of the sexual seductions] was the discovery of his own paedophilic impulses. In a letter to Fliess he reports a dream of sex-play with his nine-year-old daughter (not his niece, as Jones states in the *Life*). This is false. Jones writes: 'When, finally, he had a dream about his American niece Hella which he had to interpret as covering a sexual wish towards his eldest daughter he felt he had personal first-hand evidence of the correctness of his theory' (*Life*, vol. I, p. 354). This is exactly what Freud says in the letter to Fliess, written on May 31, 1897: 'Not long ago I dreamt that I was feeling over-affectionately towards Mathilde, but her

name was 'Hella', and then I saw the word 'Hella' in heavy type before me. The solution is that Hella is the name of an American niece whose photograph we have been sent."

More important is the accusation that Cioffi makes that Freud is not honourable. He writes: "Would an honourable man have represented this state of affairs by speaking of 'statements made by patients in which they ascribed their symptoms to passive sexual experiences in early childhood, as Freud did in 1914?' Cioffi is making the point that Freud had written that his patients "assure me . . . emphatically of their unbelief", but in the passage Cioffi quotes, Freud seems to be saying that the patients themselves ascribed their symptoms to seduction. It is true that both statements as printed cannot be true. There is a contradiction. But Cioffi immediately jumps to the conclusion that Freud is dishonourable, instead of taking into account the far more likely possibility that his own ability to understand Freud is impaired by a lack of command of the language in which Freud wrote. After all, Freud did not write the words Cioffi ascribes to him in English but in German, and it would seem sensible, before accusing a man of an egregious and dishonourable lie, to take the trouble to read what he wrote in the language in which he wrote it. Had he done so Cioffi would have discovered that Freud never said anything like what Strachey translates. Freud does not say that the patients ascribed their symptoms to sexual seductions, but that he, Freud, was able to infer this from the nature of the symptoms. There is, therefore, no contradiction with the earlier passage, and Freud is not saying anything dishonourable or misleading.

I would very much like to see a reference to where Freud claims that "children may be starved, beaten or tortured but providing they have not been simultaneously sexually stimulated the experience can have no neurotic aftermath". Freud never says this anywhere in his writings. This is Cioffi's extrapolation. But it is false, even as an inference, since one of the things that Freud was attempting to do in his 1896 papers about the reality of sexual abuse was to search for the more general causes of mental illness. Sexual trauma was one kind of trauma and was clearly leading Freud to a traumatic or traumatogenic theory of the neuroses. I find it a pity that Freud abandoned his belief in the reality of sexual abuse, thereby deflecting psychoanalysis from this very path. But to claim that Freud never had any interest in what happens to children unless they were sexually seduced is sheer nonsense.

Finally, Cioffi asserts (again with no evidence) that "Masson is also mistaken in holding that Freud based his conviction on the reality of the seductions on stories recalled and recounted by his patients in the course of analysis". Cioffi's position is that "Freud's reconstructions were not based on confessions but on his own theoretical requirements and/or intuitions" and that "Freud gave up the seduction theory because he realized that the theme of seduction had been introduced into the material of the analytic sessions by his own preconceptions." In other words, for Cioffi, Freud invented the seductions, then forced them upon his patients, finally felt sheepish about this, and gave it up. But is it not a strange coincidence that at the same time that all this was happening, there were real seductions taking place in the real world, in very large numbers? Freud did not know this (according to Cioffi); he simply happened to believe it for theoretical reasons. And his patients, although seduction must have played a role in the lives of some of them, never remembered these seductions, and were never able to remember them, even after treatment; but simply agreed with Freud to please him. Surely it is not irrelevant to look at the literature of the time to attempt to discover what Freud knew, and what was the reality, especially if this literature has not been examined before. Cioffi writes that I go to "pointless lengths to establish the topicality of the theme of child abuse during the period Freud spent at the Salpêtrière". But Cioffi's total unfamiliarity with this literature is surely not something of which he ought to be proud. Surely it does matter what Freud read and what facts he knew and when he knew them. Professor Cioffi evidently lives in a world where all that matters are logical deductions. Hence he is

absolved, unlike the rest of us, from learning languages, or reading literature. But then he should refrain from talking about areas in which his ignorance makes him liable to the kind of errors so obviously displayed in his review.

JEFFREY M. MASSON.
381 63rd St, Oakland, CA 94618.

Bibliothèque Nationale

Sir, - May I add another foreigner's word in defence of the Bibliothèque Nationale? When I presented my reader's card for renewal in March 1975, it occasioned some curiosity among the staff, none of whom had been born when it was issued in July 1922. The prompt attention given me in the Manuscript Room recalled that of my earliest visit. When my wife came to call for me, describing me as a white-haired professor, they said that all the readers looked like that. But the mention of my name stirred them as if I were Dr Manette just out of the Bastille. Bending the rules, they brought her up to fetch me.

Over the same span of years my experience in the British Library has prompted more than one defence against such complaints, which spring usually from ignorance.

GOROON S. HAIGHT
Woodbridge, Connecticut.

'The Time Machine'

Sir, - It seems ironic that, in an issue which exhibits the *dozen* of Gissing scholars pointing out the errors of Wells's latest biographer (Letters November 2), you should have allowed Umberto Eco to describe *The Time Machine* as a story containing "free and adventurous fantastical about a lost world" of "prehistoric people". If Eco has forgotten that the major part of *The Time Machine* is set in AD 802, 701, no wonder he is unsure about its science-fictional status! In fact, recent theorists of science fiction have invariably recognized *The Time Machine* as one of the archetypal SF texts, and I should have thought that was its proper place in Eco's theory, too.

PATRICK PARRINDER.
Department of English Language and Literature,
University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading.

Drawing the Line

Sir, - In your issue of November 9 you publish a review of *The Lipstick Boys* by Jeremy Reed, a novel on a homosexual theme, in the course of which your reviewer appears to wish to hide his own assessment of the novel as an over-written third-rate piece of work. This does not make reading matter of consuming interest, but I have no quarrel with that. What I find horrifying are the wholly gratuitous filthy quotations, some of them in capital letters, on which your reviewer fastens with particular relish. Am I to assume that you consider that nowadays anything goes, or that you have had no time to read what you are responsible for including in the pages of your journal?

J. P. STERN.
83 Banton Road, Cambridge.

The Camel

Sir, - In reply to Keith Richmond's letter in your issue of October 19, this by-now famous quotation originated with the most celebrated Governor of Jerusalem since Pontius Pilate, Sir Ronald Storrs.

Sir Ronald, the first Governor after Britain took over the Mandate for Palestine, is fondly remembered by all lovers of Jerusalem for having introduced legislation to ensure that no building of any kind may be erected in the capital unless it is built of Jerusalem stone. GABRIEL ZIFRONY.
6 Petzel Street, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Cambodian History

Sir, - In the last paragraph of my letter in reply to Ralph Smith (November 9), the word "him" appeared in the penultimate sentence thanks only to a misunderstanding. When Dr Smith's publishers declined to send the *New Statesman* a review copy of his book, it was I who failed to persuade them not him. ANTHONY BARNETT.
44 Goodwin's Court, London WC2.

Basil Blackwell

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Competitive instincts

Paul Smith

RICHARD D. MANDELL
Sport: A cultural history
340pp. Guildford: Columbia University Press.
£20.80.
0231 05470 X

Sport may originate in play but it soon becomes very much like work. Indeed, as Richard D. Mandell reminds us, for Marxist scholars it is in a sense work, or at least a means of adaptation and training for the performance of the tasks imposed on man by the state of productive relations and the needs of developing technology. More and more, too, it has come to provide work for historians, as they extend their fields of interest in inverse proportion to their opportunities of employment. The recent announcement of a new journal of sport history signals the arrival of the British team, limbering up in scuffed plimsolls to face the crack cohorts of Mandell's *almae matres*, the Sportwissenschaftliches Institut of the University of Bonn and the Historisches Seminar of the Sporthochschule in Cologne.

For a self-styled "mediocre, middle-aged, long-distance runner", Mandell sets out to cover a huge field from prehistoric man to the Moscow Olympics. His definition of sport embraces all "competitive activity of the whole human body according to sets of rules for purposes ostensibly or symbolically set apart from the serious, essential aspects of life", which has the merit of excluding very boring machine-dominated activities like motor racing, although it is not quite clear why it does not exclude horse racing as well. He proclaims himself "intimidated, but not subdued" by the magnitude of his task. At first sight, that seems not a bad working credo for a historian, but there are moments in the first half of this book when one rather wishes the fear had overcome the audacity, as the narrative races from Sumeria to seventeenth-century England, with paragraphs surveying the economic development of Japan from 1000 to 1500 or skimming the recreational views of Luther, Zwingle, Rabelais, Montaigne, Elvot and Milton into twenty-odd lines.

These early chapters are not without interesting observations, on sport's close integration with drama, dance and religious ritual, its role in preparation for war and its function in distinguishing the attributes of ruling élites and permitting the symbolic expression of the superior qualities which validated their position. Sports involving the horse, and therefore a relatively high level of wealth, were especially calculated both to set the aristocracy apart and to reinforce its symbolic and practical ascendancy. Mandell sees hunting as a pursuit intended to frighten the peasants as much as the gentry. The countries and the centuries hurry by too fast, however, for any great rigour or sometimes even any great plausibility to be achieved in the relation of sporting phenomena to cultural contexts. The historical background is occasionally shaky. "Aside from messengers [sic], peddlers, and sailors, aristocrats were the only people who traveled" (in medieval Europe) is an odd statement from a member of the clergy. Generalizations tend to be crude and unsupported. "Wealthy, landed Englishmen", we hear, "were apt to be avaricious and cruel." We are told without any hint of critical reserve that Japan's capacity to assimilate Western techniques in the nineteenth century has been linked to "certain suggestive similarities" with the inventive society of England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: "England was also geographically insular, and also characterized by continuous social violence."

Matters pick up a little when we approach modern times and Mandell is able to embark on the major theme of the book, the relationship between sport, industrial society and the nation state. Since his is essentially a functional view of sport, he denies any fundamental continuity, despite descriptive similarities, between "modern" and "pre-modern" varieties. Modern sport is seen as the product of the changes in European mentality that brought about the Industrial Revolution. The new developments are traced in the first instance to seventeenth and eighteenth-century England, where the appearance of the sports record (in

horse racing) signalled the concern for precise measurement and the application of quantifiable effort that was to help promote industrial take-off, and betting on the basis of rational assessment of chances likewise denoted the growth of the entrepreneurial outlook. Developing in parallel with industrialism, the sports of mass appeal both reproduced and inculcated the values and behavioural patterns required to make it function: the rationality and discipline of the organized game and the skilled performance replicated the rationality and discipline of industrial work, and were embodied in legislative codes and enforced by governing authorities analogous to those needed to ensure the stability of industrial society. Where industrial society was relatively slow to emerge, however, in central and eastern Europe, Mandell sees a contrasting development of sport, "induced" by the anxiety of intellectuals, movements and states to incorporate physical exercise into their ideal schemes for the formation of individuals, the production of social, cultural and political élites, and the integration and toughening of national groups. This, based largely on gymnastics, was the sport of communal solidarity rather than that of individual competition, but Mandell sees his two traditions converging at least superficially, as "statist" sport adopted the individualistic programme of events of Anglo-Saxon sport, though using it for different ends.

These propositions at least indicate an analytical framework worth discussing, but they are raggedly and repetitively handled here. Mandell has assembled a great deal of miscellaneous information, much of it curious and some of it alarming ("a West German attempt to increase the buoyancy of male swimmers by pumping their large intestines full of air was unsuccessful due to the failure to discover a retainable cork"). He has put under contribution a body of German sports scholarship not very familiar to Anglo-Saxon readers, though his insistence on its superiority would be more convincing if his acquaintance with the literature in English did not seem slightly out of date (on British sport for example, his bibliography lacks Bailey's *Leisure and Class in Victorian England* and Mason's *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, which appeared respectively in 1978 and 1980). What he has not done is to integrate the material into a satisfactory analytical treatment. A plan more chronological and geographical than thematic effectively prevents sustained scholarly examination of any of the numerous ideas which jog across the reader's field of vision.

The major thesis about modern sport as capitalism in shorts surely invites some critical assessment. It may now be commonplace to contend that the recreation of the football or the baseball crowd really represents a manipulation of their leisure for purposes both of

profit and of social control, but it is not self-evident that popular sport is or was wholly unfree or spontaneous, or very efficient in achieving the objectives sometimes ascribed to its promoters. To exhibit the precise relationship between organized sport and the capitalist spirit would require in particular a study of the growth of sports entrepreneurship as a branch of the mass entertainment industry which Mandell does not attempt. It seems clear that sport can often be bad business, sustained by the wealthy more for kudos than for cash and more from sentimentality than from calculation, or so the traditional eagerness of English brewers and builders to sink money into effectively bankrupt football clubs would suggest. Whether mass sport has had or even tended to have much success in instilling the values and discipline of industrial work can be doubted. Good time-keeping, skilled labour, team work and individual effort displayed by mostly paid performers are not necessarily morally infectious to spectators, and critics from classical times to Baden-Powell and beyond have seen sports-watching not as a form of inspiration for work but as an unhealthy diversion from it. The exploitation of sport in the interests of consumerism by turning much of it into the televised advertising of sponsors' brand names may have boosted sales but is in process of destroying its own base. No one really wants to watch Crown Paints play Dulux, and tobacco industry sponsorship has established a link between sport and death so bizarre as to bring even the British Medical Association into action.

Sport as an agent of social and political integration has a mixed record. Mandell fairly points to the democratic and egalitarian tendency of free competition in the achievement of measured performance according to rules. One of Lord Randolph Churchill's dotter expressions of Tory Democracy was an appeal to working men to unite with the aristocracy in the name of their common bond of sport and immortality. Yet Mandell notes that sport remains to a degree class-specific and tainted by racial and sexual discrimination. Common sports played a role in the assimilation of immigrants into the United States and play one now to reaching across geographical distance and tribal antagonisms in developing states. Max Nordau sought to make "muscular Judaism" one of the sinews of early Zionism. Stalin and nation builders, however, could find the solidarities of sport pressed into the service of opposition - for example, as one of the means by which the German Social Democratic party sought to create an alternative society within which its members could live a complete life insulated from the pressure of German capitalism and the Prussian state. The integrative powers of sport at international level have over overcome its national affiliations: it is hard to see a case for the continuation of the

Olympic Games except as an avowed combination of drug company trials, advertising feudal and hucksters' mart, all pressed into the service of national self-reassurance.

Perhaps the real importance of mass sport in modern society is to be sought less in the creation of profit, the inculcation of values, the implantation of allegiances, than in the antidote it has often appeared to supply to the boredom, repetitiveness and constriction of urban industrial life. Mandell might have generalized his observation of the importance for the growth of American sport of a rapidly increasing young male population. If not exactly a prophylactic against revolution, sport has probably been a safety valve for the release of energy and emotion in environments offering few satisfactory outlets to either. Its structure of rule-based, ostensibly egalitarian competition has helped to sustain the illusory promise of unlimited opportunity on which the precarious stability of city life has largely depended since the nineteenth century. It has partially satisfied the need, in a heavily loaded system of distributing rewards, to be able to look to a model of fairness and "clean" dealing. Most of all, sport has provided a cathartic drama, artificially but powerfully staged, involving its heroes in an endless series of fabulous climaxes ("finals", "big games", "fights of the century") which have been greedily absorbed into lives where climax and colour have not otherwise been readily available. Most of these facets of its cultural role are glanced at in Mandell's pages, but the synthesis of them into a coherent account of its significance for modern man unfortunately never occurs.

Professor Mandell ends with a paean to the joys and beauties of sport which seems to have nothing much to do with the largely pessimistic conclusions at which he has previously arrived. He has already informed us: "That sports events are not very substantial events, that athletes are almost intrinsically boring, and that that not many noticeable changes of any significance take place in American sport has been known for a long time." He has decried most sports journalism (a subject, like that of sporting language, deserving more careful attention than it gets) as "slovenly, childish, and venal". He has attacked intercollegiate football for degrading the educational mission of most American universities. He has noted the intrusion of the simplicities of sports rhetoric and "game dramaturgy" into the conceptualization and handling of problems, like the Vietnam war, which are not games at all. He has spoken of the aggressive and individualistic values and metaphors of sport as rivaling the Judeo-Christian tradition and established loyalties to community, locality, and family. Yet the convention of concluding with an inspirational uplift prevails.

placings and the like; it is significant that a book that is in general well illustrated includes no diagrams of field settings at all. It is a pity that Frith, only occasionally strays into this region - most markedly, as is natural, when dealing with the evolution of the googly, the biggest single technical step forward in the history of spin bowling; but the book makes excellent reading, being well informed and competently written. The author's range of knowledge and anecdotes about an immense number of practitioners of this great and declining art, many of them now extremely obscure, is impressive and enviable.

Jack Pollard has followed up his monumental *Australian Cricket* with a slimmer, though still fairly weighty, *Pictorial History of Australian Cricket*, and once again he has done a remarkably good job. This is a full, balanced and instructive history of the game in Australia, without the awkwardnesses imposed by the dictionary form of his earlier book, though with one considerable limitation which the title does not make clear - that it is essentially a history of Australian international cricket. There is not much about interstate, and almost nothing about club, cricket - omissions which to themselves point significantly to the governing modern trend. Still, Pollard knows his subject and tells his story well. The book is

particularly revealing on the boardroom rampuses that have so bedevilled the game in Australia (culminating on one occasion in an actual punch-up). Its strongest feature of all, though, is undoubtedly its illustration, with both black-and-white and colour photographs, which are superb - especially the older ones - and are likely to be its principal selling points. (It may need one or two of these, seeing that at £20 it is ideologically priced with its much more massive predecessor.)

Bob Willis's second *Captain's Diary* covers last winter's hapless England tour of New Zealand and Pakistan. As with his previous *Diary* of the 1982-3 tour of Australia, and with even more reason, it is written in a tone strangely compounded of determination, honesty of purpose, low vitality and depression. The tour's results, and Willis's own struggle with ill health, are cause enough for the last. The Tests are adequately described, but the concluding "Reflections" are the most interesting part. Willis is in many ways the old-fashioned professional pitchforked into the most exposed role of all in the modern game, and trying decently to make sense of it. He faces his side's shortcomings with admirable directness, and the explanations he advances for them are sensible and forthright - if also depressing in their implications.

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A ghost among Melanesians

James Clifford

MARGARET GARDINER
Footprints on Malekula: A memoir of Bernard Deacon
76pp. Edinburgh: Solamander Press. £8.95.
0 907540 45 7

Bernard Deacon was a brilliant young anthropologist who in 1926, after undergraduate studies at Cambridge, undertook difficult fieldwork on the island of Malekula in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu). At the end of four months and about to depart for Australia, he was carried off by blackwater fever (a form of malignant malaria). Deacon was twenty-four years old when he died. He would certainly have made a mark, probably a profound one, on his discipline. As it stands, he is known for discovering a "six-class" marriage system on nearby Ambrym Island (a system of enduring fame in the arcane world of kinship studies) and for one book, *Malekula: A vanishing people in the New Hebrides* (1934), heroically compiled from his fieldnotes by Camilla Wedgwood.

Everyone agreed that Bernard Deacon was special. He dazzled his teachers. But he was more than simply a fine student – winning First Class Honours in Natural Sciences, Medieval and Modern Languages and Anthropology. He possessed uncommon linguistic virtuosity joined to natural scientific rigour and a philosophical, poetic temperament. *Malekula*, as its editor well knew, was only a mock-up of the book Deacon might have written. We catch glimpses of that unwritten book in the present "memoir" composed by his friend Margaret Gardiner.

This affecting, small work contains not a word too many or too few. Gardiner selects passages from the letters Deacon wrote to her from the field. She surrounds them with an understated account of Cambridge life in the early 1920s, of her first meetings with Deacon, of his background (a child of an Irish family where his father held a consular post), and the strange metamorphosis of their friendship into love and finally a kind of commitment. (She intended to join him in Australia, although they had spent only a handful of days in each other's company and were never engaged.) We follow a subtle, amorous interoscillation in Deacon's letters which occupy central stage in the memoir. He seems to fall deeper in love through writing; he longs to be with his correspondent; then the writing stops. Deacon's last letter arrived more than a month after Mar-

garet Gardiner had heard by telegram of his death. She recounts the moment sparsely, with almost no comment, leaving us – as she was left for a half-century – with the wound, the silence and the possibility, open. (Would they have lived happily ever after?) The memoir concludes with an observant short narrative of Gardiner's own visit to Malekula in 1983. Fifty-five years later, Deacon is remembered and appropriately honoured by local Melanesians (a people and culture that did not, in fact, "vanish", as seemed inevitable in 1926).

Bernard's headstone was a plain rectangular slab with the words "A.B. Deacon Anthropologist 1903-1927" engraved upon it. Now it was surrounded by jars and tins of flowers and hung with little garlands – moving tributes from the villagers for this special occasion. I added my jar and turning, looked down a hill on the other side, where through the trees, there was a glimpse of the sea. Suddenly, for some inexplicable reason and despite my belief that graves are irrelevant, I was glad that Bernard had been buried within sight of the sea.

Deacon was consumed by his ethnographic work. At times – like all fieldworkers – he felt isolated, trapped by the difficulty of his interpretive task (by the sheer complexity of Melanesian custom) and by the island environment (its intense beauty and crushing, malarial climate). He writes to his distant companion – for that is her role in the letters – with a mixture of amorous yearning, lucid self-awareness, and at times a (literally) feverish search for some vision or grasp of an illusive "whole" reality. There is an irreducible oddness and originality to his turn of mind which the edited letters preserve. Supremely intelligent, he allows himself to be confused.

Deacon had come to Malekula schooled in Cambridge anthropology and particularly in the work of W. H. R. Rivers. Mid-way in his stay, the explanatory guides began to crumble. In the letters he is overwhelmed by how much is left out of his teachers' over-learned formulas, and also by how incompatible earlier accounts of the New Hebrides are with each other, and with his own research. Deacon writes of a period in his fieldwork when he has learned enough to know what vast and formerly unsuspected levels of ignorance remain. Synthetic vision escapes; he lacks theoretical overview or the distance needed to see broad patterns. Deacon confronts this experience boastfully and without clutching at premature keys to "the culture" (as if it were a single thing). He makes some very acute and disabused observations about fieldwork "rapport", about the push and pull, sympathy and impatience, exposure and isolation of ethnographic work. "The only

privacy, the only remnant of Europe here, is thought." And wrestling with his role as cultural observer, "my interest in natives is too general – in fact, in people as a whole – I don't react spontaneously to them as a person, except rarely. It is only the realization that something I know in myself is known by another that may suddenly – what? – waken me to him. I don't know. Otherwise I may know him but he is relevant only in relation to others. I'm sorry, all this is very dull."

It is far from dull. It cuts deeply. But if in his letters Deacon seriously questioned interpersonal ethnographic relations and the possibility of deriving over-arching anthropological theories, and if he sensed, at times, an enormous gulf separating him from the complex people immediately at hand, none of this should be taken to suggest that he was continually estranged in the New Hebrides. There are moods of intense joy, of closeness to people and place. He was, apparently, well liked by his hosts. And there are moments of (Melanesian?) clarity about the whole situation: "Here come the men and I must talk about offerings to ghosts. I am a ghost." Nor should we assume that Deacon's questioning of anthropological attitudes and methods would have led him to abandon his scientific task. He was devoted to empirical research and to the search for rigorous explanations. The letters contain various proposals for more systematic forms of ethnographic description and cross-cultural comparison. He would certainly have wrestled his texts and observations into a "theory" of New Hebridean culture and history. But reading these deeply reflective and poetic letters one wonders what shape that theory would have taken. Might it have avoided some of the pseudo-scientific reductions and a-historical visions that beset the structural functionalism of his generation? And would his ethnography have found room in its analytic structure for the kind of searching, lucid uncertainty we read in his letters?

But we should be wary of projecting too much method into these meandering, avocative texts. They are, after all, love letters, written in a desire for communion. They can be sensuous (Norfolk Island):

Feathery pines on the hills, like a frieze against the sky, and steep, fertile valleys, with lemon orchards hidden by blue convolvulus and hanging bougainvillea like lava flowing down the sides, blossomy frosted flame trees, sweet smelling oaks in flower (not our English oak), olives among the rocks, a creeper called Samson's hair, and the Alophias, tree ferns, rising above the bed of the valley like starfish opening to the sun – teeming, silent growth

everywhere. Out behind the house there are scarlet splashes of hibiscus, lovely flowers: I had breakfast there, and then lunch – or dinner – with baked sweet potatoes and yams, and passion-fruit and peaches, endless peaches, – you squash them underfoot as you walk.

In these letters, Deacon's writing modulates freely between scientific, erotic and spiritual registers. He is possessed by a "strange love" – an impossible intimacy with truth. He sometimes feels cut off, torn between the need to be with his distant companion and to finish the research on Malekula. At other times there is no conflict. Throughout the letters scientific and amorous discourses unexpectedly and movingly intertwine. Just one example, from a moment when, reviewing his ethnographic work so far, he perceives "how lamentably inadequate it is":

At one or two points there has been a sudden vision of what the whole might be like, a sense of the movement of everything as a marvellously living and an uncontrollable joy in it – and then suddenly there is this now constantly recurring, overwhelming depression, a sudden draining of intellect and will, by which alone it is possible to live here. There is no thing in this forgotten world to which I can set as a whole, except this vision of a consummation and a unity – and yet it is what I must constantly doubt. It is so easy, in this strange heat, for very weariness of flesh to rest content with something imperfect and obscure, a prostration of the desire of the inner spirit towards – what? the possibility of truth? It is strange love. You are so much more than a possibility: perhaps it is just that . . .

Margaret Gardiner sparingly interposes her own comments among Deacon's letters. And she casts herself in 1926 as a rather incontinent, wilful young woman. Deacon's letters give a different sense of her. During the Cambridge years, she writes, "I took it for granted that every young man I got to know would fall in love with me: it seemed inevitable, part of the natural order of things." Her friendship with Deacon was of a different order, a serious, deepening loyalty and shared intelligence that has endured. The present memoir, composed with tact, love, and gentle humour, reveals more than just a man. It portrays a beautiful, bitter relationship. And it infuses a tragedy story – for Deacon's death haunts every line – with many affirmations. There is his amazing, courageous last letter, written from "the world of death". And there are happy photographs of Deacon as a schoolboy, on a picnic with his parents, handsome and dandified with cane and cigarette, or pensive on Malekula, . . . and Margaret Gardiner at Cambridge, in a grey pose, scarf in her throat, waving a flower or vine of some sort.

other communities of Nepal. Readers familiar with the self-reliance, independence and obvious *jole de vivre* of women in Buddhist societies will realize that their role as equal partners of their husbands creates a basis for happiness and fulfillment such as few Hindu wives ever attain. The liberality of a society such as that of the Sherpas clearly offers possibilities for the development of the human personality which are denied to those living in the patriarchal climate of high-caste Hindu society.

In a most illuminating chapter on religion the author describes in great detail the rules concerning purity and pollution, which determine so much of the Hindu villagers' thought and behaviour. Their preoccupation with the maintenance of ritual purity appears almost obsessive, for in the course of a normal day's village life is constantly affected by various degrees of pollution which he must counteract with the appropriate purification rituals. But for the average villager, and particularly for women subject to the polluting effects of their sexual functions, "purity is always a fleeting state, achieved with effort and soon lost again". The description of rituals is followed by a penetrating analysis of the symbolism of Hindu mythology, and this contains an ingenious interpretation of the contrasting aspects of the Goddess as the gentle and beautiful Parvati and the fierce and bloodthirsty Durga. Bennett argues that Durga reflects a predominantly male view, focused on the problematic woman, while Parvati presents Hindu women's own idealized perception of themselves and the male world they inhabit.

Love's fluctuations

David Robey

NICHOLAS MANN
Petrarch
211pp. Oxford University Press. £7.95
(paperback, £1.95).
0 19287610 4
KINELM FOSTER
Petrarch: Poet and humanist
214pp. Edinburgh University Press. £7.
0 85224 485 1

Ever since Reoan, in the middle of the last century, described him as the first modern man, Petrarch's modernity has been a recurrent topic of historians and critics. For Renan it related to his philological spirit and feeling for the ancient world; others have seen it in Petrarch's peculiar self-awareness, his highly developed sense of his personal identity. Yet with the progressive dissolution of the cultural tradition which he did so much to establish, we may wonder whether Petrarch's modernity is as actual and relevant as it once was. Significantly, the "medieval" Dante now seems to speak more clearly and forcefully to the present than his successor. The answer to the question "Why read Petrarch?" is no longer such an easy one to give.

Nicholas Mann's and Kinelm Foster's new studies both offer answers, at least implicitly, to this question, but they do so in very different ways. Both books are general introductions to Petrarch and his work, written by scholars with powerful credentials in the field; the first is intended more for a broad readership, the second aimed primarily at students of Italian literature. Each argues, persuasively and authoritatively, for a view of their subject radically opposed to many respects to the other's – a fact rather less striking to Petrarch's case than to that of many other writers, in view of the peculiar complexity and elusiveness of his work.

Dr Mann treats Petrarch's writings as an extended self-portrait, and a portrait of a highly paradoxical and indeterminate kind. He stresses Petrarch's restlessness and dissatisfaction, his awareness of the flux of life and of the contradictions within himself: between the love of woman and of God, classical interests and Christian teaching, the life of involvement in the world and that of withdrawal, the desire for fame and the sense of transitoriness, the feeling for the dignity and for the misery of man. Such contradictions were never seriously resolved by Petrarch, in Mann's view, though from time to time he may have chosen, for literary purposes, to fix himself on one side of an opposition or the other; the essential nature of the man and the work was incomplete, open-ended and fluctuating. Moreover – this is a particular emphasis of Mann's book – the man and the work are wholly identical; there is no way of separating literature from life in Petrarch's case, of reaching behind the images constructed by this intensely literary scholar, obsessed with writing and rewriting and with the emulation of the ancients, to find a presumed genuine identity. The "central paradox of Petrarch himself" is, according to Mann, irresolvable.

His Petrarch is therefore a predominantly male figure, "without history". In Umberto Eco's influential phrase, although some shift of interest in his later years is acknowledged, it is also predominantly the Petrarch of the Latin works, some attention is given to the vernacular poetry, but this is seen mainly – and usefully – as expressing the same complex of attitudes and interests as the rest of Petrarch's writings. Nor is much attention paid to the relationship of either his Latin or his vernacular works to their immediate literary-historical and cultural context. The aim is rather to "present both life and works" as complementary creations of a single elusive intellect.

Yet while as an introduction – no doubt inevitably, for the most part – the book has its limitations, it also provides a forceful, sympathetic and agreeably personal portrait of its subject, a portrait far more interesting and accessible to the modern reader than the view that most recent scholarship has offered. Foster's introduction, in contrast, is much less attractive in this respect, but at the same time compensates for a number of Mann's omissions. In particular it pays more systematic attention to Petrarch's vernacular poetry, which occupies some two-thirds of the book, and it gives a much clearer picture of the relationship between Petrarch's work as a whole and the contemporary context. It also takes as its main topic the factor most notably underplayed, rightly or wrongly, in Mann's study: the development of Petrarch's attitudes and values, particularly within the *Canzoniere*, the collection of vernacular lyrics relating mainly to his love for Laura.

Foster's argument starts from the shift of interest which many scholars, including Mann, have acknowledged in Petrarch's work, from the pre-Christian, pagan world and classical poetry, to Christian values and classical moral philosophy, the latter combination constituting, according to Foster, the distinctive Christian humanism that successfully reconciled the conflicting urges of Petrarch's earlier years. The recent reading of some of his writings, notably by the Spanish scholar Francisco Rico, allows Foster to see a "major turning point" in this respect between approximately 1346 and 1353, a crucial period of change accelerated by the death of Laura in 1348. While about half the poems in the *Canzoniere* were written during Laura's life, Foster argues that the "crucial period of its shaping and organising" occurred in the years immediately following her death, and that the collection is profoundly marked by the attitudes and interests he developed then.

The words of the day

Giulio Lepschy

STEFANIA DE STEFANIS CICCONI, ILARIA BONOMI AND ANDREA MASINI
La stampa periodica milanese della prima metà dell'Ottocento: Testi e concordanze
Five volumes. Pisa: Giardini.

Not many years have elapsed since the foremost Italian philologist (G. Contini) and literary historian (C. Dionisotti), independently of each other, urged scholars to produce concordances. Their appeal seems to have had an effect, and now Italian is very well served. Not only is a concordance (and sometimes more than one) available, in print or on computer, for many of the classics, but there is an important series devoted to early and contemporary literature (Alinea's *Spogli elettronici*), and modern Italian enjoys two different frequency dictionaries, each based on a corpus half a million words long. This new work produced by Stefania De Stefanis Cicconi (already known for an excellent study of the *questione della lingua* in Italian journals of the early nineteenth century), with the help of Ilaria Bonomi and Andrea Masini, marks another first for Italian lexicography. There seems to be no comparable work for any other language.

Professor Cicconi has compiled an anthology from fifty-eight Milanese periodicals. Some are famous journals, well known to any student of Italian, such as the *Conciliatore*, the *Biblioteca Italiana*, the *Corriere delle dame*, or the *Politecnico*. The period covered, 1800-47, is of crucial importance for the formation of the language and culture of modern Italy. These were the years in which Manzoni and Leopardi wrote their main works, the discussions between classicists and romantics took place, and intellectual battles were fought which paved the way for unification. The choice of Milan is in a way an obvious one, as it was culturally the most lively of Italian cities, open to European ideas (it was the town responsible for Stendhal's wish to be remembered as "Arrigo Boyle milanese"); and the background to cultural production has been investigated in depth (one may recall, among recent studies, Berengo's *Intellettuale e libro nella Milano della Restaurazione*, 1980).

This collection is published in five volumes. The first contains the introduction by Cicconi and the anthology of samples from periodicals, subdivided into twenty different areas, from politics, theatre and literature to the sciences, through historical and geographical popularization, biography, fashion, advertising etc. The texts are over one million words in length. The following three volumes present the computerized concordances: each occurrence of a word in particular is paid more systematic attention to Petrarch's vernacular poetry, which occupies some two-thirds of the book, and it gives a much clearer picture of the relationship between Petrarch's work as a whole and the contemporary context. It also takes as its main topic the factor most notably underplayed, rightly or wrongly, in Mann's study: the development of Petrarch's attitudes and values, particularly within the *Canzoniere*, the collection of vernacular lyrics relating mainly to his love for Laura.

The *Canzoniere* as we have it, according to Foster, was "intended to make coherent sense – to reveal, on examination, some pattern of succession and development". The pattern is as follows: from total infatuation at the beginning of the collection, the poet passes through a gradual process of liberation to a contemplation of the strangeness and the spiritual dangers of love, the siren- or Medusa-like quality of Laura's beauty, and the consequent risk of ignoring the divine; after Laura's death the new spiritual communion which, paradoxically, he now begins to enjoy with her image (the major element of novelty in the *Canzoniere*, in Foster's view) frees the poet first from his despair, then from his carnal desire, so that finally, at the very end, he is able to transcend her altogether and turn to the true sources of spiritual life.

This is not the place to adjudicate between Foster's and Mann's readings, though it must be said that both have considerable scholarly merits and interest. But if we consider them as broad introductions to Petrarch's life and work, we may reasonably conclude that Foster's somewhat narrow and moralistic picture of the vernacular poet will speak much less strongly to the modern reader than Mann's fluctuating and contradictory man of letters. To some extent the narrowness of Foster's interpretation is compensated for by the sections he devotes to the poems' language and style.

But the general points that he makes there about Petrarch's use of metrical forms are as much propagandistic as functional, and the rest of his formal analysis rests on a fundamentally ornamental view of poetic language (he speaks, revealingly, of a "triumph of style in the service of meaning"), which seems to do less than justice to the real force and originality of Petrarch's writing.

To bring out this force and originality the best approach to Petrarch's vernacular work is not, surely, to proceed from the Latin works to the presumed content of the *Canzoniere* and then to its stylistic form, as Foster does, but to proceed the other way round and start with the consideration of style. If one does this, one can arrive at a much fuller sense of the peculiar vision of love and beauty that Petrarch's poetry conveys, a vision only partly explainable by reference to the rest of his work. Gianfranco Contini used the term "anti-naturalistic" to this vision, and Foster alludes on occasion to Contini's point, but without developing it as much as it merits. For a great deal of the *Canzoniere*'s originality lies not just in its internalization of experience, but in its incorporeal, disintegrated, refracted and mysterious images of Laura and the world – images which have a great deal to say to the modern reader, and which deserve exploration and analysis quite as much as the Christian humanism to which Foster attaches so much weight.

every form is printed within a context, fixed by the computer, of about a dozen words, and accompanied by the reference to the place where it occurs in the texts. The fifth volume offers two frequency lists, one of words in alphabetical order, and the other in decreasing order of frequency.

It is of course difficult to make comparisons, as Italian was at the time limited to a minority of literate users. But as the samples taken from the periodicals most approximate the ordinary written language of the time, it is of some interest to see how this frequency list differs from those prepared for the modern period, and to wonder why, for instance, words like *primo* and *nuovo* were more frequent than now. The concordance will be valuable for investigating not only the lexicon, but, together with the text volume, also the syntax of Italian in the first half of the nineteenth century. Even a quick survey, limited to the letter A, reveals many interesting facts. One finds words not recorded in ordinary Italian dictionaries, like *accorrenza* ("flocking", from *correre*), or *aspiara* (the woman who looks after the reels, *aspi*, in spinning), or the puzzling *arbie* (in a passage concerning insect stings, we are told that lice, fleas and other insects without *arbie* are not worth discussing). There seem unfortunately to be even ghost words, like the mysterious *emphiclorio*, which I suspect to be a misprint for *emphiclorio* ("to find one's niche"). In many cases the concordance enables us to backtrack the use of

certain words: for instance *abracadabra*, which dictionaries quote from twentieth-century authors, is here used in 1843; *accantonare* "to billet", documented for 1806, is here quoted for 1801; *oscugamano* "towel", attested by dictionaries for 1836, is here used in an article of 1830 (it is interesting that there is a Medieval Latin *sugamonus* in a document of 1350, which makes one wonder whether the word did not have continuous spoken usage before re-emerging later in writing).

Not the least attraction of this work is the introduction of over two hundred pages in which Cicconi gives us a masterly characterization of the different areas sampled in the anthology, providing an informative and penetrating picture of Milanese periodicals of the time. In many cases the contrast with modern developments is striking: the language of political articles is usually linear and simple, in marked opposition to the obscurity which characterizes Italian newspapers after unification; the language of advertising is also simple and straightforward and does not exploit the resources of rhetoric as does its modern counterpart; the style used for theatre reviews, which constituted then a far more important section of the paper than today, is, however, original and innovative. As if to compensate for the computerized coldness of the concordance, whose appeal is of course limited to professional scholars, the introduction is a pleasure to read and will be enjoyed by anyone interested in the roots of modern Italian culture.

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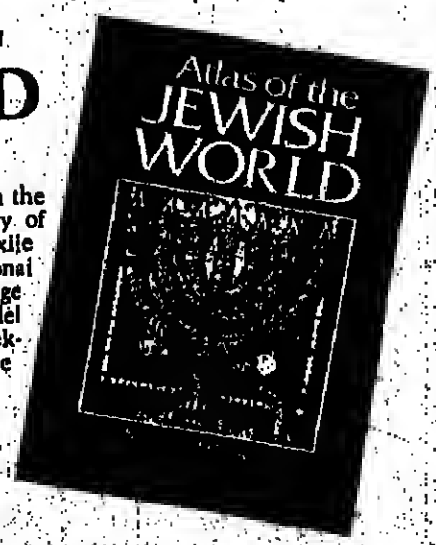
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Jewish World

Bound to disobedience

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

LYNN BENNETT
Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters: Social and symbolic roles of high-caste women in Nepal
355pp. New York: Columbia University Press.
\$39.
0 231 04664 2

Lynn Bennett has lived and worked in Nepal for the past twelve years. Part of that time was spent in planning and supervising a research project involving investigations among women of different ethnic groups by a team of social scientists. In her own fieldwork, which resulted in the present book, she recorded lengthy interviews with the village women who were studying and *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters* contains many frank verbatim accounts of her informants' experiences, in their interaction with husbands, co-wives and relatives-in-law. The title of the book reflects the ambiguity of the attitudes of Nepalese Hindus to women in different roles within the family framework. While daughters and sisters are treated with affection and in certain circumstances even with reverence, young wives are regarded with suspicion and fear. There is not only the widespread superstition that their sexuality weakens and destroys their husbands' spiritual purity and strength, but in the eyes of her husband's family a young bride is a dangerous intruder threatening the cohesion of the patri-

lineal kin-group. The opposition between a woman's parental family and the household into which she has married sets the stage for a drama that continues throughout her life, and it is this tension between her consanguineal and affinal ties which renders a woman's position in a traditional joint family insecure and ambiguous. In her husband's house she is under the control of her mother-in-law and is required to maintain a studied aloofness vis-à-vis her spouse, who on his part is constrained by custom to pay far less attention to his wife than he does to his parents or even to his brothers. A young wife is not supposed to address her husband and she can seldom speak to him except in the privacy of their own room. The extreme respect a wife must show her husband is expressed in the daily ritual in which the woman washes her husband's feet and drinks of that same water by splashing some of it into her mouth. A Brahmin or Chhetri woman believes that if it fell her inevitable fate (*karma*) to be obedient, respectful and pleasing to her husband, whom she should treat "as if he were a god".

Because of the pervasive ascetic values of Hindu culture romantic affection and sexuality can be expressed only covertly. However, these ascetic values do not stand in the way of strong emotional ties between women and their brothers, ties which are reflected in rituals performed during the Dashain festival when sisters worship brothers and vice versa. There is a certain similarity between the brother-sister relation and the patron-patroness relation. Men have political and economic power

while women lack this power but, on the other hand, have ritual superiority over consanguineal men.

Whereas in many Islamic, male-dominated societies, such as that of the Pathans, women suffer under the heavy-handed authority and occasional physical violence of men, in Nepalese Hindu society, the suffering of women is largely inflicted by other women, be it demanding and often deliberately harsh mothers-in-law or inconsiderate and jealous co-wives. Using excerpts from classical Hindu scriptures depicting the conduct of gods and goddesses, Bennett demonstrates how basic social attitudes attributed to immortals and humans alike have remained constant through the ages. One of these texts shows that the difficulties women experience in adjusting to a marriage with an unwanted husband are comparable to the suffering of Sati Devi married by her father to the god Shiva in his disguise as an elderly ascetic, and the author remarks that "the goddess Sati Devi's feelings about marriage are movingly similar to those I saw expressed by village women". It is the lack of choice in the selection of their life partners which makes marriage so traumatic an event in the life of high-caste girls. Women of other Hindu groups have more freedom and in her earlier study, *The Status of Women in Nepal*, Bennett stated explicitly that "women in most Nepalese communities except in very orthodox Brahmin and Chhetri families, do have some choice as to whom to marry and whom to marry". Among Hindus a veiled stigma is attached to such marriages, but they are common among

Doubtful promises

Neil Corcoran

BLAKE MORRISON
Dark Glasses
71pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press.
£3.95.
0701128755

Given Blake Morrison's prominence on the current literary scene, and his combative and controversial editing, with Andrew Motion, of the *Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*, it would be absurd to pretend that his first collection of poems can be approached with quite the innocence of expectation with which one normally approaches first books. The Penguin introduction, and numerous reviews, have given us a very clear idea of what Morrison thinks poetry today ought to be: metaphor, narrative, and "judic self-consciousness" might all be predictable in his own work.

They do all, indeed, figure prominently in *Dark Glasses*, where Morrison's affiliations are obvious enough. There is the metaphorical display of "Theory of Heredity", which teases out an initially far-fetched relationship between heredity and the crowd at a football match, in a way reminiscent of Raine or Reid. There is, reminiscent of Tom Paulin, the allegorizing of some common experience into almost portentous abstraction, as when the stripping of a pine dresser becomes, in its final stanza, "a walk through sand-dunes down to the sea, / the space where honesty might begin". "A Child in Winter" owes more than just its thin quatrain form to Seamus Heaney; and when the sun "comes through / Like a faint reminder of things not done", it shines from a heavily Larkinian sky, and illuminates the fact that Morrison is the author of a study of the Movement. There is, too, that presence of inverted commas around whole poems, and the frequent intrusion of italics, which signal narrative in, say, the work of Andrew Motion. *Dark Glasses* has a long narrative poem forming the whole of its second half, in the manner of Paul Muldoon's last book.

What distinguishes *Dark Glasses*, however, alerting us to the presence of a genuinely individual talent amidst the magpie clutter of a perhaps factitiously established "tradition", is, firstly, the register of a distinct tone of voice, constant throughout a succession of otherwise very different kinds of poem, and secondly, the pursuit of a single major preoccupation (which itself in part implies Morrison's own self-consciousness as a poet-critic).

The tone established by these poems might be described as wistfully expectant. Various kinds of failure, defeat and loss – connected with family relationships, with love, and (strangely enough) with God – are turned in the light of different kinds of narrative and dramatic scrutiny: not to produce an easy gloom, but a kind of less-deceived anticipation. If the certainties of religion have gone, God has been transformed into the "Chancellor of Gifts" and there is still the joy of the secular city. "Christ's fisherman" must have felt like

this, / Crying out, amazed, at their spangled catch". If love is not now what it once was, there is still the delighted memory of "our lips first meeting – / that wet little bridge of sighs". If family attachments have been broken, there remains the – perhaps ridiculous – longing for a world in which "we are all ready to begin" again.

This kind of tonal or imaginative oxymoron is given its clearest expression in "Flood" (which, with "Meningococcus", on the death of a child, is one of the two best of the book's short poems). "We live in the promise of miraculous lakes", the poem begins – the lakes to be formed by the flooding of the Thames. But, "our eyes bright with disaster", the promise is both thrilling and appalling; so that by the end of this brief, intense little poem, the flood has become a name for other kinds of apocalypse too: in our dreams no sandbags hold back the flood: We would bring the whole world down if we could.

The preoccupation which fascinates Morrison is clearly related to this ambiguity of tone, and it is expressed in the book's title poem, where the "dark glasses" are, among other instances of the mysterious, "What you must never mention to anyone". *Dark Glasses* is a book deeply compelled by secrets. The monologue, "Grange Boy", which is actually, I think, a melodramatic poem (although one can never be sure that Morrison does not recognize such things, and intend them; just as I am not sure he does not intend the Larkin imitation in "The Renunciation"), concludes, "English, we hoard our secrets to the end". In "Dark Glasses", despite – or because of – the secrets, "something cries out to be resolved" and "The pen moves off with its search parties". Morrison's long narrative poem, "The Inquisitor", is an extension of that quest.

Ostensibly it is a spy story reworking material on Lech Walesa, Roberto Calvi and the Falklands war, among much else. But it is also, as its title and one of its epigraphs, from Browning suggest, and as hinted analogues in the poem itself, actually a way of exposing too uncover "secrets", and how the activity can be personally dangerous. The poem's plot turns on the losses and sadnesses of the spy's private life, and culminates when a trust – founded almost impossible to give – is actually misplaced. Or, at least, I think, this is what happens: in the manner of the oen narrative, these things are left relatively elusive. In its separate parts, however, "The Inquisitor" is entirely lucid. A poem of real verve and assurance, it can accommodate the sad comedy of a literary young man imagining an unwanted pregnancy in a version of Eliot's "Who is the third who walks always beside you?"; an anatomy of some of the absurdities of post-imperial Britain, "an island in love with the idea / of islands"; and the most uncomely sadness of an abandoned wife, her experience paralleled with that of Canis in Ovid in Part VIII of the poem. Sadness is, altogether, the colour of Blake Morrison's work, and the one "image of trust" in "The Inquisitor" has the pathos of an acknowledgment that real trust cannot very often repose anywhere.

Tearing sounds

Roger Garfitt

DAVID HARSENT
Mister Punch
70pp. Oxford University Press. £4.50.
0192119664

How do we recognize achievement in poetry? Partly by the symmetries it creates, the retrospective satisfactions it affords. So with *Mister Punch*, the audacious seventy-page sequence David Harsent has based on the traditional puppet figure. Punch first appeared in three poems in Harsent's last collection, *Dreams of the Dead*, but the conflicts he embodies were implicit in Harsent's work from the beginning. The title poem of his very first pamphlet, *Tonight's Lover*, opened with what now seems a perfect Punchline: "Watching you sleep – my only advantage". It is a swift descent from that hopeless advantage to Punch's abject attack: "If nothing works", he thumbed her lip, "I could kill you to keep you".

A short step from "Watching you sleep" to Punch dancing attendance: When she undressed, thoughtlessly, ready for bed, taking her blouse off last, as always, her arse a white pout topping the suntanned legs, he'd be there

with his imbecile grin; the little pool of silk on the bedroom floor was his to clean up.

Punch's progress is a rapid decline, from adulterous skirmishes to the chastening complexities of an affair, and thence to a post-humous life as the silent preserver of his wife's letters in "Punch's Daybook". The advantages he seizes are always hopeless. Punch's dilemma is that he turns aggressor because he is already victim.

But whose victim? His mistress's? Her very power is her limitation. Even "in the hour *enriches et loue*", when neon streaks her hair and she comes "into her own", she is no more than a male projection, "her face / as docile as a

print on glass". The images that convey that affair's intensity – the underwater images, for instance, or "Punch and the Judy" – are equally images of self-enclosure. Harsent conveys very well the peculiar sterility of those who trade "only in hiss".

His wife's victim then? She could as well be his. The wife of the "Daybook" seems an older version of the wife of *After Dark*, Harsent's second collection. There she lived uselessly on the poet's terms, an exile in his landscape, waiting up at night for his return. Now she has taken a leaf out of Harsent's poems, becoming "the valley's stoic", "the ascetic" who "wants to shine in the eye of God". "The stores are lit. . . the house is steeped / in a musty odour of fruit." But she is still, in a sense, waiting up: "If I should stray, / how would you ever find me?"

It is the wife who gives us the clue to Punch. "Will you never / recover from your life?" she asks. "At every turn / there is something to tear you, or make you afraid." Punch is undone by his own imaginings, his insecurities, the memories that run with him "like a dog-pack". Punch is his own victim. As he admits in his endearing confession to the Virgin, "I held myself in contempt; Lady, I flogged myself with inventions."

Chirrup

such indulgence!

The humour and self-knowledge of these lines mark Punch's final maturity. They also mark a new maturity in Harsent's poetry. His earlier personae, Nijinsky, Simeon Stylites, withdrew into themselves, their pain "their final vanity". "The Blessed Punchline, Mart," still registers the temptation to retreat to his pillar, to "grow remote and ungraspable"; but now the temptation is gently satirized. Harsent has become the master of more voices than the first person. *Mister Punch* is a considerable lyrical achievement: few poets writing today can command such tension or such fluency of line. It also has, in the counterpoint between the three figures, the complex resonances of a ploy.

So long as it's singable

Gavin Ewart

SAMMY CAHN
The Songwriter's Rhyming Dictionary
159pp. Souvenir Press. £8.95 (paperback, £5.95).
0285 62637 X

It is part of received wisdom that any nonsense can be sung. Even Shakespeare treated most of his songs as mood music. They aren't very tightly written. "When that I was and a little tiny boy" is not a great line; "heavy/lavy" is not a first-class rhyme in "Sigh no more, ladies!"; and there are bits that are almost nonsense:

O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.

Everybody can sing both high and low. Even W. S. Gilbert and Noël Coward veer towards nonsense in places. The tunes take the strain.

None of this would do for Sammy Cahn. He is an old master of the classical thirty-two-bar jazz lyric. Bad rhymes give him a pain. "Guy/ pride" can be sung, if the "d" of pride is swallowed – but that isn't good enough. Nor is assonance (though he does admit inversion). The only "impure" rhymes (his adjective) that are admissible are self-consciously comic ones: indignant / pregnant (pregnant), cothurnic / effusively / musically. He's completely against frantic / panic, forever / together, time / time.

The important thing, says Cahn, is "singability". You can't sing "Love laughs at locksmiths". For him, the difference between a poem and a lyric is exactly this ("a poem is meant for the eye, while a lyric is meant for the ear"). The great songwriters are often just people who have seen something simple right in front of their noses, he writes. For him, apart from the phone call asking him to write a song, the idea came first, even before the words, though the idea often came in words ("Saturday Night Is The Loneliest Night Of The Week"), hammered out on a typewriter; then the words were added, or subtracted, or

give point to the melody. There was often rewriting; almost always, "neatening up".

Cahn's greatest copyright (his own words) was the Second World War number "Till Walk Alone":

I'LL WALK ALONE
Because, to tell the truth, I'll be lonely.
I don't mind being lonely
When my heart tells me you
Are lonely too.

I'LL WALK ALONE
They'll ask me why and I'll tell them I'd rather;
There are dreams I must gather.
Dreams we fashioned the night
You held me tight.

I'll always be near you,
Wherever you are,
Each night in every prayer.

If you call I'll hear you,
No matter how far;
Just close your eyes and I'll be there.

Please walk alone
And send your love and your kisses to guide me.
Till you're walking beside me,
I'LL WALK ALONE.

(From *Songs with Lyrics* by Sammy Cahn, Cahn Music Co., 170 NE 33rd Street, Fort Lauderdale, Fla 33334)

This did a lot for the morale of separated lovers (though the second chorus is weak), and was his main contribution to the war effort. "Hold me tight" is, of course, a euphemism, in born-again America, words like "hell" and "booze" had to be avoided like the plague. All this comes in showbiz terms, where romantic clichés prevail, prudishness rules and hypocrisy is standard. "I'm the best", he told Bing Crosby at his first audition. The immortal Alvin, the wonderful Julie Andrews, the legendary Frank Loesser, all figure here, together with the almost unbelievably great Frank Sinatra (who once said to a young *Evening Standard* reporter: "Don't bug me, boy! I'm too big!"). This is my hearsay, not Cahn's.

There are good poets who write to "use" John Betjeman, Kit Wright, Kipling. The main difference is that they don't ignore the unpleasantness of life. Apart from blue-eyed and odd mavericks like "Ten Cents A Dance" and "Buddy, Can You Spare A Dime", all the thirty-two-bar boys do

The age of the flying buttress

Christopher Wilson

JEAN BONY
French Gothic Architecture of the 12th and 13th Centuries
625pp. University of California Press. £105.80.
0520 028317

While other medieval architectural historians active over the past four decades have been content to write monographs and regional surveys of rather limited scope, Jean Bony has had his sights fixed firmly on some of the central problems and their ramifications for European art as a whole. The present volume is Professor Bony's largest work to date and should probably be seen as his most important, not least because it deploys his uniquely broad and penetrating vision for the benefit of a much larger public than that reached by his other major writings, almost all of which are in specialist publications.

Within the relatively confined space of about 100,000 words, he presents us with a wide-ranging conspectus of French Gothic which sets out to

trace . . . the dynamics of change and the unpredictability of stylistic invention [to order to] recover . . . some of the intensity of meaning [Gothic] had for the men who created it and who kept rethinking and reimagining it, following no preestablished destiny and guided by no other occasionally than that of constantly revitalizing the power and originality of their vision.

Few will quarrel with this eschewal of teleology and historicism, but so bold an assertion of the autonomy of Gothic is likely to disconcert non-specialist readers. Bony's decision to focus on the generation and regeneration of artistic tradition is in fact no more than appropriate acknowledgment that Gothic architecture is exceptional among the great movements of Western art in the extent to which it developed according to its own immanent processes and remained inaccessible to "ideology". By compellingly and precisely describing the distinctive visual qualities that gave revelatory significance to the great masterpieces, Bony succeeds remarkably in his aim of recreating the impact which the major works made when newly built. But his rather single-minded emphasis on the

Gothic designer's artistic freedom leads him sometimes to underestimate other factors bearing on the appearance of the buildings.

The three-storey elevation of St-Yved at Braine may well reflect incipient weariness of the four-storey grid of the Early Gothic cathedrals, but more palpable influences are surely the quasi-Cistercian austerity of the Premonstratensian Rule followed at Braine and the simple lack of money for cathedral-like splendours. Even at the grandest level, economics could impinge on aesthetics and pragmatic considerations might outweigh the dictates of architectural fashion. At Strasbourg Cathedral the abnormal breadth of the mid-thirteenth-century nave was a consequence of having to build on to the old-fashioned but undemolishable recent choir and transepts. Bony makes no mention of the older work and blandly ascribes the deviant proportions of the nave to the influence of classicizing tendencies in German Romanesque.

The patterns of influence traced within the Gothic heartland follow broadly what has already been established in earlier studies, including Bony's own, but the genealogies of designs outside northern France do not always

carry conviction. Too often a resemblance to a French church is seen as proof of borrowing, irrespective of the absence of corroborative historical links, as in the bracketing of St-Omer and Southwark Cathedrals on the strength of their superficially similar middle storeys. The likeness, such as it is, must be explicable as coincidence or as the outcome of parallel yet independent developments, since the detailing of the whole design at Southwark, including the middle storey, resembles not St-Omer but the much more accessible choir at Canterbury and Rochester. In general, Bony overestimates the frequency and importance of the contacts between English and French architecture during the sixty years separating the two isolated peaks of Frenchness: Canterbury and Westminster Abbey. But then for him, Gothic "from its Parisian beginnings in the 1130s to the decisive shift of the late thirteenth century . . . remains a French thing. . ."

Bony's view of the development of French Gothic as a whole encompasses several innovative interpretations, of which the most challenging is the contention that "the pre-eminent position taken by the flying buttress in the



The rules of St-Lucien, Beauvais (begun c.1190), drawn in 1864 by Augustin Van den Bergh: from an engraving reproduced in this book reviewed here.

In introspective mood

John Harvey

PETER FERGUSON
Architecture of Solitude: Cistercian abbeys in twelfth-century England
188pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£89.50.
0691 040249

Among the arts, architecture presents the greatest conceptual difficulty. Its literature, apart from the barely descriptive, is riddled with misapprehensions and by failure to distinguish between the mistress art and construction building as a whole. This difficulty is compounded when what is dealt with lies outside the strict line of Greco-Roman tradition and the disciplined canons of Vitruvius, Alberti and Palladio. In Banister Fletcher's attempt to give universal coverage, he forced the West into one chronological series of "The Historical Styles" yet regarded not only the Far East and Ancient America, but also the whole of the Sasanian architecture of Islam, as "non-historical".

This awkwardness of approach has seriously affected our understanding of the Middle Ages, divided between pigeon-holes: domestic, military and so forth. Such artificial categories already impeded an overall view long before modern specialization, which has compounded the problem with style and produced separate "architectures" for all the monastic orders. This is a heavy liability, but it may be admitted that there is occasionally some justification for a particular approach, and this is notably the case with what Peter Fergusson has called the architecture of solitude: the totality of architectural form exhibited in England by buildings erected for the early Cistercians. An even more extreme instance of the dominance of programme was to come later, when the bridges of Sweden appeared to prede-

"Revelations". Yet, as Bertil Berthelson showed as long ago as 1947 from study of surviving buildings of her order in five countries, it is a misconception to think of a single Bright-line architecture, or of a style derived from a sacrosanct specification.

In fact the short period dealt with by Professor Fergusson, from the founding of Waverley in 1128 until the end of the century, shows at least three successive styles of which the first is not architectural at all. It is this early phase of utilitarian building, effectively vernacular and often in wood rather than stone, for which the monks and lay brothers themselves were substantially responsible. At the other extreme, covering the last generation after 1170, is the splendid and luminous architecture of Byland Abbey and related works in the advanced tradition to an English Gothic. We have to remember that, within the period here dealt with, a new architectural style had appeared, namely the first Gothic. With this transformation – regarded as wholly French – the book has little to do. There is no reference to the extraordinary stylistic and structural parallels (around 1125–50) between buildings of the Seljuk Turks in eastern Anatolia and the most distinctive proto-Gothic of the Cistercians at Fontenay. The technological revolution of the twelfth century, marked by correct alignments and fine ashlar, is noted only after 1170, a half-century later than the primary impact of Euclid (through Arabic) upon Western builders.

Fergusson is concerned with architectural responsibility and devotes a substantial appendix to the builders of Cistercian monasteries, listing thirty-two names probably concerned with the construction of sixteen houses between 1128 and 1204. Of these named men seven were abbots or monks, two lay brothers, and two carpenters. The rest were masons, including a single "artificer", but only two were described as masters: Godwyn at Byland

(c.1170–90) and William *magister rovi operis* at Revesby (1170–98); a third, John le Flaminge at Quarr (c.1150) was "employed for building". The rest appear mainly as witnesses to charters, for which their free status would qualify them. It is indeed probable that most of them were employed by the houses concerned, but evidently not all as masters. At Rufford, within the last twenty or thirty years of the century, nine masons are recorded; at Fountains there were five in the same period, along with a carpenter. More detailed study is needed before fresh conclusions can be drawn.

What does to some extent differentiate Cistercian building is the maintenance of yearly visitation by the mother-house at Cîteaux, and the originally strict objections to ornate detail, and to ostentatious towers. This asceticism was, however, yielding to pressures from outside fashion when so superbly architectonic an effect as the west front of Byland could be designed.

The book is richly illustrated to display many connections with the regional styles of northern France. Paradoxically, these comparisons demonstrate a multiplicity of sources and refute any imagined central directorate with the medieval equivalent of a drawing-office. That there were common factors, widely spread abroad, is true of the earliest works of the order, yet by the end of the first two generations it was national and regional diversity that reigned. At Fountains, the first church of 1135–46, so recently discovered by Dr Glyn Coppack, was within a few years superseded (1148–70) by the vastly different and magnificent east whose ruins we know. It is the diversity in unity that is impressive and convincingly demonstrates that, beyond a plan-type and a cult of simplicity, there was no such phenomenon as "Cistercian architecture".

What there was, simplified and freed from the antecedent clutter of enrichment, was an architectural concept close to the simple and withdrawn elements of Islamic style. A landing

imagination of [the Chartres and Bourges architects and their followers] is so manifest that [High Gothic architecture] would probably be best described as the architecture of the flying buttress". There can be no denying that the vertiginously tiered flyers of the thirteenth-century cathedrals possess great expressive power, but it is difficult to believe that they were not conceived of primarily as a means of endowing the interiors with that awe-inspiring High Gothic invention, the lofty translucent clerestory whose walls are reduced to slender uprights incapable by themselves of carrying a masonry vault. The lesser imaginative significance of flying buttresses is evident from the marked dissimilarity of all the main examples, whereas the interior elevations that they made possible show a remarkably coherent and continuous evolution. The case for the flying buttress as the driving force behind High Gothic architecture is not furthered by ignoring Robert Branner's suggestion that the original design of Bourges envisaged a lower clerestory and flyers of modest Early Gothic scale, or by drawing into the discussion the upper storeys of Beauvais, St-Quentin and Le Mans, all built during the mid-thirteenth century to designs which may or may not owe something to plans drawn up during the High Gothic period. Bony's misconstruing of the creative role of the flying buttress and his High Gothicizing of those composites, Beauvais, St-Quentin and Le Mans, hint at desperation to break away from the textbook trek through the interiors of Chartres, Solsoons, Rheims and Amiens. Time-worn though this route is, it is hard to believe that it has quite lost its usefulness as a basis for exploring the unity and diversity of High Gothic.

Discussion of its most controversial aspects should not obscure the value of this book as a conscientious synthesis, a species all but extinct in the historiography of medieval art. *French Gothic Architecture of the 12th and 13th Centuries* is also an excellent work of reference thanks to the very full bibliography and even more to the abundant and well chosen illustrations. Unfortunately, its high price will put it beyond the reach of the wide readership which its eloquence and non-technical approach would otherwise attract.

feature of Cistercian buildings, though by no means exclusively found in them, was an introspective quality fundamentally related to Sufism. This is not to say that the Cistercians were less Christian than their contemporaries but that they tended (doubtless unconsciously) to go beyond Christianity. Upon all the different modes of their work was a clear impact of the spirit, and it was this that made – especially in England – a marked impression upon the ascetic age of Gothic.

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Principles in decay

Colin Lucas

T.C.W. BLANNING
The French Revolution in Germany:
Occupation and resistance in the Rhineland
1792-1802.
353pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £22.50.
0198225644

Partisan polemic which constrains evidence to support some teleological view of the present's relationship to the past seems to have almost disappeared from the historiography of the French Revolution as it affected France itself. Even the conscious philosophical premises of scholars hide behind a mode of writing which, by its emphasis on the display of documentary evidence and its concentration on issues with closely defined contexts, appears to owe much to empiricism. One has only to compare the writings of Albert Soboul with those of his equally Marxist successor in the chair of French Revolution history at the Sorbonne.

However, older fashions are still alive and well in the study of the occupied and annexed lands. Nowhere is this more true than of Germany. To say that the twenty-five-year-old "Atlanticist" thesis still retains a few rags of respectability to clothe the nakedness exposed by scholars for other regions is perhaps to say no more than that no one has bothered to do the job here. But what is flourishing is the business of providing contemporary German radical democracy with a historical pedigree - the German "Jacobins" of the 1790s. Just a few months ago, in a special number of the house magazine of French revolutionary historians devoted entirely to Germany, Heinrich Scheel produced yet another study of the Mainz Jacobins. Once again, it was based on the belief that these men (and women) transmitted the pure doctrine of the egalitarian Revolution to Germany, thus explaining why Mainz was so radical in 1848, etc.

Professor Scheel has clearly not read T.C.W. Blanning, nor indeed had any of the other contributors to this special number. There is no person or personification of the standard fate of Anglo-Saxon monarchs on the period. Rather, one should perhaps be relieved for Scheel's peace of mind. For, Dr Blanning's well-researched and closely argued book puts the Rhineland experience during the 1790s in quite a different light.

In Blanning's view, if the French intervention in the Rhineland did not burst forth from an entirely cloudless sky, there was at most just a bit of light cirrus around. The peasant troubles of 1789 had died down; the petty princes were reformers; the Church hierarchy was enterprising; and in relative harmony with the parish priests, the representative institutions worked more or less; geography and nature combined to allow trade, industry and agricul-

ture to flourish even if some towns (like ghastly Cologne) stagnated. As for the pro-French Jacobins, they were few in number and not talking about the issues that moved most people.

The high principles that preceded the French intervention were irrelevant to local conditions. The unfolding of French rule (and assimilation as four departments in 1798 was no more than the systematization of French rule) was the epitome of the rapid decay of principle that attended French presence everywhere after 1792. It is well known that by the time of the Directory the problems of finance had transformed the war into a policy of waging it in order to finance it. Blanning gives us a most vivid and convincing account of what this actually meant on the ground.

Whatever the shifts of government policy or the attitude of individual French Commissioners, the central reality in the Rhineland was that the army was in a conquered land. And, from the generals with their *Tafelgeld* to the soldiers with their more direct methods of self-satisfaction, the army knew it. The imposition of French rule was an unmitigated disaster in both political and economic terms, a long litany of chauvinistic contempt, naked exploitation, and systematic spoliation. From the euphemistically named *agences d'évocation*, from soldiers desecrating village churches, from generals abusing burghers as cretins and "mere Mainizers", from corrupt third-rate officials who would never have got a job in a proper French department, the Rhinelanders could gain only one message - and it was not about the brotherhood of free men.

From this basis, Blanning leads us inexorably to his conclusion. The reaction of the mass of the population to this revolution *à la française* was outright rejection. The Rhineland gradually sank into a morass of obstruction, tax strike, religious resistance, public disorder and crime. Out of this experience there grew rapidly a new sense of identity. A compound of practical xenophobia and nostalgia for the old system, it gave Rhinelanders the complementary characters of being both German and members of their particular, pre-revolutionary statelets.

By the end of this book, one is left wondering where all the good guys have gone. In part, this is the effect of Blanning's somewhat Whiggish position. He begins the book with a suitably updated but positively Burkean image when he propounds that, as far as the Rhineland was concerned, "the French Revolution is better likened to a chain-saw, which felled an ancient, gnarled, but still flourishing oak". Hence, by and large, the French revolutionaries could only do harm: Indeed, in a perhaps rather unnecessary twist, the author ascribes the absence of major revolt in the area not simply to the overwhelming presence of the French army but also to the absence of serious,

pre-revolutionary tensions.

In fact, the good guys are still here, but in piteous state. Caught between a realization of their compatriots' lack of fitness for liberty and a recognition of the appallingly illiberal conduct of the French, the Rhineland Jacobins appear as despised and, if not despicable, at least ineffectual and irrelevant personalities. It is not only in his perception of their irrelevance that Blanning differs strikingly from the current German view of these men. He does not, for example, seem to admit at all of the distinction between liberals and democrats made by historians such as Scheel. They are all mere liberals for him. One wonders if he has not overdone it a bit. As he says, the Rhineland Jacobins, like their compatriots, mutated into German nationalists in these years whilst retaining their radicalism. Their experience helped to forge the basis of an authentic German radicalism that one can recognize without having to take refuge in abstract intellectualism or teleological assertion.

The fate of men like Görrer, Rehmann and Eickemeyer was not of course very different from that of French Jacobins in the later years of the Revolution and the Empire. This leads to a more important point. The history of the Rhineland, as indeed of the Belgian provinces, of Piedmont and of Switzerland (though that country awaits a historian of Blanning's talents), bears remarkable similarities with that of revolutionary France itself. Many of the policies pursued and problems encountered by the Directory were extensions of similar policies and problems inside France. Widespread rural non-cooperation, religious resistance, tax strikes, conscription rebellion (in Belgium, not in the Rhineland where it was not applied), requisitioning, the collapse of poor relief, economic disaster, paper money, brigandage on a large scale, urban decay, administrative chaos and uncooperative local officials, the failure of directorial propaganda and *fêtes*, and more besides are all familiar to historians of the Revolution inside France.

In some senses and in some areas, the revolutionary authorities treated France itself like a conquered country. Certainly, in the lower Rhône valley and the west (not to mention Corsica), the military presence was pervasive and frequently destructive. Punitive billeting was a standard repressive feature throughout the later 1790s. Most of the larger towns of the six or seven departments of south-east France were under military rule (*état de siège*) for much of the Directory. Many of the detailed incidents recorded by Blanning have exact parallels in France - for example, the contempt of French officials for Rhinelanders matches that shown by northern officials working in southern France; the razing of Kusel echoes that of Bédoin.

Of course, it would be absurd to equate the military depredations in the occupied lands

with those inside France. Here lies one of the main divergences in experience. Nonetheless, there is a remarkable coincidence in the patterns of France and her borderlands, even though the latter only got the rotten period of the French Revolution without the exaltation of the hopeful years. Ultimately, this makes good sense. The borderlands shared broadly the social and economic structures of France itself and, in the case of the Rhineland and parts of Belgium, shared features of some of the most developed parts of France.

This consideration lends added interest to Blanning's proposition that, unlike France, there was no revolutionary situation in the Rhineland. In fact, his description of the tensions of the late 1780s and of the issues of local politics is entirely reminiscent of many areas of provincial France. Even his remarks about the Rhineland peasantry may be assimilated to a wider French scene since the great peasant outbreaks of 1789 only affected some parts of France.

What is one to make of this? Of course, any observer of the countryside knows that gnarled old oaks tend to carry a lot of dead wood for much of their later life. So, the Rhineland may not have been as flourishing as one might suppose. However, it is equally fair to conclude that, like the Rhineland, some regions of France were not in a revolutionary crisis in 1789 if analysed simply in terms of their internal structures. One should also remember that the most distinctive feature of the pre-revolutionary Rhineland was its multiplicity of small political units with active, enlightened princes and structures of participatory government. Blanning's description would have enthused Alexis de Tocqueville.

Should one therefore conclude that the Rhineland teaches us not simply that, when it came to avoiding revolution, small was beautiful but also that it was the institutional failure of centralized government that brought the combined regions of France willy-nilly into Revolution? Clearly, that failure was a crucial trigger. Yet, the Revolution cannot be explained solely by it. France was more than the sum of her parts and the inherent tensions and conflicts of each part were mutually informing and exacerbating.

If Louis XIV had had his way, the early 1790s would have been different in the German Rhineland. However, the middle and later years of the decade would not have been very different in nature, if less brutal in degree. Did these four Hanish departments of France also share in that stabilization and benefit to property-owners that characterized Napoleon's rule in the rest of the country? Dr Blanning offers only a few glimpses of the years after 1802, but they do suggest a much brighter conclusion to this grim catalogue of corrupted ideals and political incompetence.

the clergy and jurists dependent on the urban magistracy.

Although sources such as tax-records and lists of members of confraternities are far from abundant, Dr Po-chia Hsia's pattern of contending religious parties representing different social groups does not seem greatly overdrawn. The Jesuits were able to use the growing number of non-guild members of the professional classes as a counter-weight to the pressure which the guilds were exerting on the magistrates to resist the twin forces of episcopal centralization and Jesuit fanaticism. However, it was not until the Thirty Years War and its aftermath that the Protestants could be expelled and the remnants of civic autonomy crushed by the bishop's army.

The book also provides many insights into the financial fortunes of the city, the growth of poverty and its alleviation, the changing nature of popular piety, the decline of popular festivals and the roles of the printing-press and the theatre. Miriam Christman has shown that sixteenth-century Latin humanism divided elite from popular culture. In Lutheran Strasbourg and here Po-chia Hsia shows how Jesuit Latin drama and Latin sodalities helped to create a middle class of laymen who joined them in playing the interests of the universal Church above those of the city of Münster.

Going and colonizing

D. K. Fieldhouse

T.O. LLOYD
The British Empire 1558-1983
430pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £19.50.
0198730241

It is extraordinary how very few one-author overall histories of the British empire have been written. Probably, if one discounts Seeley's *Expansion of England* (1883) on the ground that it did not pretend to be a history in any continuous sense, the first was by Hugh Egerton, whose *Short History of British Colonial Policy* was published in 1897. As secretary to the Emigrants Information Office he concentrated in his account mainly on the colonies of white settlement; and, given the moment when it was written, it was not surprising that its theme was the evolution of an empire fit for imperial federation. Egerton was duly elected to the new chair of Colonial History at Oxford in 1905, with Lord Milner as one of the electors, to preach the same message. For all its limitations the book remained a standard textbook for many years, mainly because there was no obvious alternative. There was another brief spate of one-volume histories after 1945 in response to the rapid evolution of the modern Commonwealth, but all except C. E. Cartwright's *The British Overseas* (1950) were equally short; and there has been no recent successor.

How does one explain this? One probable reason is lack of demand. Imperial history has always been marginal to British interests and therefore academic studies, seen normally as a by-way of domestic history. Thus the original Oxford History of England would devote occasional chapters to colonial developments to parallel their statutory chapters on Irish and Scottish history. Few students of British history bothered to study either. Conversely, students in the overseas components of the empire were primarily interested in their own local histories, with Britain coming second. What happened in other colonies and ex-colonies was not important.

Another possible explanation is that it is very difficult for one scholar to be in any sense expert in the history of so many diverse places over a long stretch of time: he is bound to be thin or out of date on specialized aspects of a lot of it. But historically the basic problem must be to decide what the proper subject-matter of imperial history is: does it lie in the peculiar qualities of the imperial power (what made it an empire-builder), in the histories of individual overseas territories, or perhaps in their interaction? It is on this last, probably unanswerable question, that those who have attempted to write histories of the British empire have been most divided.

For almost all who wrote before the early 1950s the answer seemed obvious: the central theme was the special quality of the English (rather than the British, since it was they who founded the empire and were assumed to have remained its mainspring, despite the obviously important rôle of Scots, Welsh and Irish). It was because England was unique that the British empire was different from all others, ancient and modern, and that, when it was dissolved, it was done with unrivalled elegance. What these special English qualities were deemed to be varied according to the writer. For Seeley and some early historians they were not so much genetic as environmental: England prospered overseas because she did not need to exhaust her energies in European warfare. There was then a phase, which was doggedly fought with the prevalence of Social Darwinism, when the English were thought to have reached an unequalled stage in the evolutionary process, and were thus especially qualified to rule others. As the Commonwealth began to hold this doctrine was softened and emphasis increasingly placed on the character of the British constitutional, political and administrative systems, which made it possible for the empire to be tempered by freedom and for the empires to be an evolutionary and transitional phase during which overseas countries were fitted for eventual self-rule and membership of the Commonwealth. At each stage the function of imperial history was to demonstrate the truth of the current explanation of the past and to point to its policy implications for

the present and future. In short, it was tendentious; and this is one reason why it was largely distrusted by other historians.

Decolonization invalidated almost all these approaches and with them the coherence of British imperial history. The indestructible empire dissolved fast after 1945; the Commonwealth, which was supposed to perpetuate its virtues, became the loosest of non-functional associations; and in 1973 Britain turned her back on the rest of the world and joined her one-time enemies and imperial rivals in EEC. What, thereafter, might be the theme of imperial history? Should it owe her to the terms the British were accustomed to apply to failed empires - Rome, Spain, the Chinese dynasties, the Muslims - a study of the inherent weakness of such large units and the incompetence of those who ran them?

T. O. Lloyd seems untroubled by such problems. His book, as the jacket states, is "the first major book to survey the entire history of the British empire as a completed story". Arguably, that claim is too strong: the real history of the English empire begins in the Middle Ages with the Anglo-Norman and Angevin empires, so that many of the attitudes and institutions integral with the later overseas empire were continuations or adaptations from places such as the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Nevertheless it must be said at once, and with considerable respect, that this is by far the best one-volume history of the empire so far written, and it may well preempt a limited market for a considerable time. Professor Lloyd is primarily a specialist in modern British history and has written a book on British history from 1906-76 as part of this same Shorter Oxford History of the Modern World. Perhaps because he has not been primarily a specialist in British imperial history, he seems to have no hang-up about its thematic content: he simply tells the story of British overseas activity without any evident worry about its significance. No historian can be expected to be expert over this vast field, and, like any one else, Lloyd has obviously had to get up most of the material from secondary work. He has done so exceptionally well. For each of the thirteen chronological chapters into which the book is divided he has studied the key books and essential issues. His interpretations are sensible and in most cases more or less up-to-date, though inevitably he has not always mastered the latest research material. This shows every now and then: for example, his interpretation of the origins of Pakistan now looks outdated, as does his account of the Mau Mau movement in Kenya. But this is only to say that something has to be sacrificed if one author is to get on top of so huge a mountain of material; and, since this book is obviously (and explicitly, according to the jacket) designed for schools and colleges, such refinements are a luxury.

Lloyd writes a clear prose style, avoiding what he describes as "the modern fashion of writing imperial history in the language of epigram and paradox". Moreover the narrative is pointed up by what are known in the trade as "insights", often making illuminating comparisons between one part of the empire and another: for example, Lloyd remarks on the greater experience of Dominion leaders than the British on planning and running large-scale operations during the First World War, which reflected the much larger rôle of Australasian and Canadian governments in running railways and other state enterprises; and again, when he comments that the Indian Congress leaders of the 1930s, despite their rhetoric, were in fact more attached to Britain than either Hitler or de Valera. I noted very few factual errors, though Pitt's India Act, 1784, is dated 1785 on p105 and again on p110; the French got only half of San Domingo in 1679 (p115); and Kipling published *Kim* in 1901, not in the 1880s (p172). To complete the catalogue of excellence, there are sixteen exceptionally clear and useful maps, and six statistical tables, a list of all British territories, showing the date of acquisition, the date of their receiving autonomy or independence, and where relevant, when they left the empire/Commonwealth; and a helpful annotated bibliography of the main published sources.

Yet, when all the virtues have been listed, and although one should never complain that an author has not done what he did not intend to do, what one misses in this book is a theme. Things happen, but there is no underlying explanation of why or what internal logic linked events in different parts of this world-wide concern. The earlier writers, for all the coarseness of their teleology and propagandist purposes, at least attempted to explain why the British should have been uniquely successful among modern Western states in building and sustaining an overseas empire. Historians of other failed empires have pointed to what they regard as the fundamental roots of decline. Lloyd does neither. His English just go and colonize, win wars, learn from experience, eventually decide that the empire is no longer worth the candle. There is no discussion in detail of what domestic forces - perhaps population growth, the accumulation of capital, an expanding mercantile system, aristocratic poverty or royal greed, or whatever - started off the expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; very little on those developments within Britain thereafter which provided the impulsion

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Getting it together

John Guy

ALAN G. R. SMITH
The Emergence of a Nation State: The Commonwealth of England 1529-1660
479pp. Longman. £15.95 (paperback, £8.50).
0582489733

The Tudors and Stuarts are well endowed with text-books: new ones need to be justified. Alan G. R. Smith's publisher offers a roll of drums: this series "escrows" conventional boundary dates; to meet "practical requirements" volumes treat key themes in concise chapters "short enough to be rapidly absorbed". These claims will shortly receive attention: meanwhile Dr Smith's distinctive but unbalanced achievement must be welcomed.

The test of a text-book is whether it communicates the climate of opinion in its subject as well as facts; whether it can be appreciated by teachers as well as students. I do not think Fanny Williams's *The Tudor Regime* has been displaced as the best thematic treatment of the Tudors. However, the central core of Smith's book, on the period from 1558 to 1618, meets a real need. He elucidates the problems of government and religion; he divides Elizabeth's reign into three separate phases each with its own mood and preoccupations; he offers commendably stern criticism of royal inertia during the last years of the reign. Despite the success of late-Elizabethan foreign policy, the queen left England unable to fight a foreign war without engendering domestic political friction. Smith suggests, in effect, that Elizabeth purchased domestic stability in her war years at the expense of long-term income. None of this is in itself new, but the case is argued chronologically in a sustained and judicious manner. The reader is carried along.

The early years of James I's reign, too, are given healthy and enlightened treatment - relations between Crown and Parliament, faction, financial problems, and James's own abilities and weaknesses appear in useful perspective. But the imbalance of this book becomes obvious when we pass the year 1618: Smith has written twice as much on the Tudors as the Stuarts. Thus pre-1603 discussion gets 246 pages, post-1603 only 123. The crucial decade after 1618 is compressed into eight pages: the spacious analysis afforded to Henry VIII and Elizabeth is followed by a breathless romp. In Smith's defence it might be said that only rarely does he lose his grip between 1618 and the Civil War. He over-reacts to the problems of the 1620s by reporting that the Parliament of 1624 was the only one of its generation to pass any private legislation, and when he speaks of "true opposition" at work in the Commons against Charles I in 1628. In fact, two private acts were passed in 1625 and nineteen in 1628 (one of which, the naturalization of James Freese, did not make the table in the sessional print). Whether or not a "true opposition" existed in 1628 is more complex, but since Sir John Coke, secretary of state, and Thomas Wentworth, later earl of Strafford, were

for further expansion or determined the way the empire was organized; little sign on the cultural values settlers took with them or which were exported to non-settlement colonies, but which provided much of the cement of empire; hardly anything on the eventual failure of Britain to act as the economic hub of an empire in the twentieth century, or on the changes in its social psychology which destroyed moral confidence in empire in its final decades. What happened might, it seems, have happened to almost any European state.

Perhaps Lloyd prefers to leave his readers to draw their own conclusions; perhaps he does not believe that there was any British imperial *Zeitgeist*; and perhaps he is right. Yet at the end one looked for at least one brooding chapter, and it was not there. The story may not need retelling on this scale until sufficient new research has been done to make this necessary, yet there is still scope for a broad interpretive history of an empire whose shape and character were not merely the shadow of events.

squarely behind the Petition of Right, the matter is, to say the least, doubtful.

But my chief disagreement on the Stuarts arises over the gentry controversy. We are first told that firm conclusions are difficult, but are then assured that between 1540 and 1640 the gentry rose from perhaps 5,000 to 15,000 families, that gentlemen as a group "undoubtedly" held a larger proportion of the land in 1640, and that these gentry were "wealthier and more self-confident" as a group than they had been a century earlier. These claims are controversial, especially when fed undiluted into analysis of the origins of the Civil War; at the very least the existence of J. P. Cooper's paper on "The Social Distribution of Land and Men in England" should have been acknowledged.

What have we on the earlier Tudors? The account of Henry VIII, the Reformation, and the mid-Tudor polity more than suffices; the economic, demographic and social background is particularly well sketched. However, no real advance is made on G. R. Elton's *Reform and Reformation*, which remains the best account of the pre-Elizabethan period. Bradshaw, Jennifer Loach and Tittler get a look in - but the interpretation is primarily Professor Elton's.

Smith attempts to chronicle England's genesis as a "nation state" after 1529, but this approach can be questioned. The secular *imperium*, spiritual supremacy and provincial self-determination that were the triple components of Henrician ideology did not, in my opinion, provide sufficient impetus on their own towards England's development as a nation state. At least two prominent Henricians, Cranmer and Christopher St German, wanted an international settlement of reformed doctrine in the wake of the breach with Rome - Cranmer did not give up until 1552. Add to this the militant Catholic constituency in Elizabeth's reign, the serious issues of conscience raised in Mary's reign and during the making of the Elizabethan church settlement, together with some modern conclusions upon the Tudor localities, and it becomes difficult to accept the Tudor "nation state" idea much before 1590.

This question is perhaps linked to the publisher's drama. I cannot see anything very original about 1529 or 1640 as boundary dates, but 1529 will tend to propel writers towards the "nation state" thesis. It did this to J. A. Froude, the early chapters of whose *History of England*, beginning at that date, were called "John Bullish" by Carlyle.

More worrying in the publisher's perception of "practical requirements". Six to eight-page chapters throughout are a blight. The quality of Smith's interpretation is unaffected, but the short chapters dislocate continuity, encourage some unnecessary repetition, and proliferate cross-references. They are symptomatic of the malaise whereby historical writing is filleted before it is fed to the young. Dr Smith has advanced students' understanding of the Elizabethan and Jacobean age by his perspective. It would be tragic if this series fosters, unwittingly through its format, undergraduate sciolism.

After the millennium

H. J. Cohn

R. PO-CHIA HSIA
Society and Religion in Münster, 1535-1618
306pp. Yale University Press. £22.50.
0300130053

After 1535 the episcopal city of Münster in Westphalia was notorious throughout Europe for "the kingdom of God" briefly established there by the Anabaptists, with its aggressive millenarianism, polygamy, and community of property. The bishop's lengthy siege ended with the death or exile of thousands and the slow torture of the Anabaptist monarch, John of Leiden, and his two chief lieutenants. Their corpses, suspended in iron cages from the spire of Saint Lambert as a warning against rebellion, cast a shadow over the city for the rest of the sixteenth century.

R. Po-chia Hsia's study departs effectively from the well-trodden path which concentrates on the years of Leiden and the Anabaptist ascendancy up to 1535 to examine instead the religious, social and political history of the city's restored Catholic régime. The Münster-kingdom was not the instrument only of the poor and dispossessed, but had won the sup-

port of a cross-section of urban society and was led by members of the previous ruling élite. The consequences for the city were a halving of the population, the removal of the stratum of those of middling wealth, and the replanting of its numbers over the next twenty years by immigrants from the surrounding countryside and small towns. The previously exiled wealthy Catholic families returned to exercise a strengthened domination over the citizens, but did not use their power to enforce Catholic uniformity. Reconverted Anabaptists and some Lutherans were gradually readmitted until the Imperial Religious Peace of 1555 allowed Lutheran worship again in Münster. The ruling families were able to restore much of their late medieval civic autonomy because of the bishop's weakness during the mid-sixteenth-century funds in Westphalia. They likewise regained secular control over the Church because, as the author's detailed prosopographical studies show, they continued to wield great influence over the patronage, personnel and property of numerous ecclesiastical institutions.

The real turning-point for Münster was not the aftermath of defeat but the election after 1583 of a succession of Bavarian Wittelsbach bishops who brought with them a south German banking, after absolutism, the Jesuits

and an uncompromising Counter Reformation. In 1588 the bishop also became archbishop of Cologne and established a Jesuit college in Münster. Simultaneously, civic autonomy came under attack from the centralizing Catholic state employing lawyers and Jesuits as its chief agents, and traditional civic religious piety from the challenge of Jesuit fathers demanding higher standards among the clergy and lay subservience to the Church.

The changing social composition of the city added in this new thrust of the young men against the older generation. The 800 students at the Jesuit college were a large leaven in a population of some 10,000. Many of the Jesuit priests, along with the members of other new orders such as the Poor Clares and Capuchins, were not native of the city and therefore "domesticated". The small clerical faction among the city councillors and burgher élite also were often families newly arrived in the city, or members of older mercantile families who turned to the legal professions and affluence when the mid-century economic boom descended to Baltic competition and Westphalia was ravaged by troops from both sides in the Netherlands war. By contrast the venerable Protestants were drawn from some of the older guilds and the traditional Catholics from

John Bullish

The logician at large

Alan Bell

A. J. AYER
More of My Life
224pp. Collins. £12.95.
0002170035

More of My Life continues for a further seventeen years *Part of My Life*, published in 1977. It sees A. J. Ayer at the age of thirty-five, leaving a Fellowship at Wadham College, Oxford, in 1946 for a chair at University College London, through the overstated climacteric of his fortieth birthday, into a second marriage (via numerous liaisons), then back to Oxford as Wykeham Professor of Logic and Fellow of New College.

As in *Part of My Life*, one of the most interesting features of this autobiographical instalment is the brisk reassessment of Sir Alfred's own earlier philosophical work; in the first volume *Language, Truth and Logic* was somewhat dismissively appraised. Now *The Problem of Knowledge* is preferred to his best-known work. Though outright repudiation is rare the author from time to time shows himself cross about the inadequacies of various articles.

The post-war reconstruction of the philosophy department at University College is a straightforward piece of academic administrative history, and its routine domestic nature probably turns the author's thoughts to his foreign excursions. International organizations provided many opportunities for travel abroad, particularly welcome at a time when austere exchange controls hampered merely recreational journeys. Congresses allowed a measure of gastronomic exploration; at a banquet in Bordeaux he limbered up on *littre de la royale* for "a number of keen debates, in which I took an active, indeed almost aggressive part". (He was less satisfied with a Strasbourg meeting, not least because of a dislike of Alsace.)

These travels provided some warnings: in 1951 a New York immigration officer asked, "Socialist philosophy?", when examining Ayer's passport during a stopover on a journey to Lima. For once he resisted the temptation to

reply at length, and had to content himself with an "I teach logic, not political philosophy": the question, however, was ominous for American intellectual life.

These travels provide an opportunity for some Baedeker comments on the philosophical scene in various countries, literally from China to Peru. Except for a Chinese jaunt that included Hugh Casson, Rex Warner and a notably unsympathetic Stanley Spencer, the travelogues are deployed with the dogged insistence of a purveyor of old holiday snaps. "Flying across Siberia was a wearisome business. My chief impression was that of the immense size of the country." Very flat, Norfolk.

Growing reputation in his profession was matched by a rapidly burgeoning public fame. The Third Programme had given him an opening in broadcasting, so he was already technically experienced when taken up by television. "If in the ensuing years I became something of a public figure", it was due to *The Brains Trust*, that skilfully balanced combination of education and entertainment, serious but never too solemn, so redolent of its period. The personalities and procedures of the programmes are described in detail, sometimes almost question by question, and the demise of this middle-brow, welterweight cultural phenomenon is justifiably lamented.

Malcolm Muggeridge is criticized for "allowing his prominence on television to aggrandize his self-esteem", but Ayer himself merely confesses to having "enjoyed the publicity" the programmes brought him. "What I liked best", he remarks (and this is paralleled by one of A. J. P. Taylor's major pleasures of life), "was being recognized by taxi-drivers, and this happened surprisingly often."

As in the previous volume, Sir Alfred's bump of amativeness is shown to be well developed. Many liaisons are described, long-lasting or quickly terminated, with partners named or unnamed; seductions are sometimes rapidly effected, otherwise patiently awaited, as with "a clever and attractive girl with whom I shared many friends before we became lovers".

On his travels in Russia he encountered a Moscow philosopher whose wife was "a professor of atheism". It is a title Ayer might well

have aspired to, his own atheist position being constant in his public as well as his academic life. So well did he become known for it that his friend Lord Pakenham protested in the House of Lords against his and Julian Huxley's being allowed to appear on *The Brains Trust*. When Ayer and Father Copleston, SJ, debated Free Will on Welsh television, delays caused by an electrical failure led to their being plied with so much drink by the producers that they were both incoherent during the actual broadcast: deuce. Graham Greene invited Ayer to challenge his faith with rational arguments, but soon asked him to desist: advantage Ayer. Somerset Maugham summoned him to the Villa Mauresque to provide reassurance that there was no after-life. Ayer obliged, but he found Lord Beaverbrook as a fellow-guest. He accordingly trimmed his opinions with the expected pliability of a domestic chaplain, by a muted commendation of the comforting certainties of Calvinism, showing an adaptability at variance with the smugs to Christians elsewhere in the book. Deuce again?

Ayer's professional career developed apace. He was elected young to a then senescent British Academy, still severely restricted in its numbers. There were of course disappointments, and some attacks (including a mischievous assertion that the ethical position of *Language, Truth and Logic* provided a springboard for fascism), but his successful rebuilding of a small but powerful department at University College was a professional achievement to be reckoned with.

When the Wykeham professorship at Oxford became vacant, not for Ayer the "I was

hardly aware of the Regius Chair" that Mr Taylor mentioned in his recent memoirs of the senior historical post. Ayer was fully aware that the Oxford chair carried more prestige than the London appointment, and it offered a challenge both in administration and in philosophy: he had a distaste for the terminology of Austinian linguistic philosophy and hoped to be able to counteract its influence.

There are some traditional Oxford touches in the later pages. To make the new professor feel really welcome, the procedures of the controversial election meeting – confidential but no doubt promptly procurable in the King's Arms – were recounted to him in detail, since he was "bound to learn it from the grapevine". There is even a highly characteristic internal dispute with the college chaplain over the allocation of Ayer's fine set of bachelor rooms after his remarriage.

In New College, to which he became devoted, he shared a staircase with a distinguished classical scholar. "The sound of his typewriter was audible from my bathroom. Term after term I used to hear it spinning out his commentary on Thucydides." "Spinning out" is a lapse from the author's normally laud and accurate prose; if typewriters can indeed spin, "spinning" by itself would have been a suitable word, for his colleague's commentary, though extensive, is in fact a model of concision and not facetiously drawn out. One cannot help feeling at the conclusion of this further instalment of Sir Alfred Ayer's autobiography that it would have better been conceived as, or reduced to, a closely woven single volume.

Pickwick in the Punjab

Hugh Tinker

BRIAN MONTGOMERY
Monty's Grandfather: A life's service for the
140pp. Pooler Blandford. £6.95.
0713714018

The grandfather of the Field Marshal – and of his younger brother, the author of this book – was born in 1809, went to India in 1828, and was at the apex of his Indian career during the Mutiny and the years immediately following. To Colonel Montgomery, his grandfather must seem not too distant; to most of his readers the events he records will belong to quite another world. Sifting through family papers, Montgomery has composed a biography and a history of the time which is both an acceptable scholarly study and an agreeable piece of literature: for he writes with style and a sure feeling for atmosphere and period.

One would not expect a revisionist version in this account of the great men of the Mutiny period: indeed *Monty's Grandfather* might have been from the pen of Sir John Kaye, Bosworth Smith, or perhaps Maud Diver. The author sees his forebear and his peers as giants: he accepts their standards and their judgments as true. Only in his epilogue does he introduce conclusions that reflect the enormous changes which have taken place in our perception of the Raj in its heroic period. In the end he does inquire "whether this great band of civil administrators and soldiers... sufficiently understood their mainly Hindu and Muslim subjects", and he acknowledges that "we shall all probably have to get used to a new version of history which may seem strange to my generation and of course would have been anathema to my grandfather and his contemporaries". For the most part, though, Montgomery interprets the events of the early and mid-nineteenth century from the contemporary British point of view.

The photograph of Sir Robert Montgomery reproduced in the book is of a genial old buffer, and we are not surprised to learn that his friends nicknamed him "Pickwick". Probably those who still know anything about him will recall only that he had the undesirable task of acting as mediator and moderator when the Punjab was placed by Dalhousie under the joint rule of Henry and John Lawrence, who disagreed violently about almost everything (Sir Robert also came from the same remote corner of northern Ireland as did the Lawrence

brothers, and so many other Victorian men of action).

If his role during those early Punjab days was that of a pacifier, he showed himself as much a man of blood and iron as John Lawrence. William Hodson and John Nicholson when the crisis of 1857 burst upon a flaccid and complacent civil and military hierarchy. Like these other iron men, Montgomery had an inflexible Christian conviction of righteousness which enabled him to countenance actions horrifying (in all probability) to those unequipped with similar ideological certainties.

Perhaps the worst atrocity of the Mutiny was the killing – not in the heat of battle but by quasi-judicial murder – of nearly 500 men of the 26th Native Infantry who, having been disarmed in their barracks at Mian Mir, had gone berserk and murdered four of their officers. Five hundred for four is on the Lillie scale. Even such a tough, Punjab administrator as W.W. Thorburn described this as "a repulsive executed butchery". Yet Sir Robert commended Cooper, who supervised the blood-bath, as follows:

All honour to you for what you have done, and right well you did it... it will be a feat in your eyes long as you live... There will be some singers who have them all picked up and send them to New York to have had slaughter enough and we wait a few days they will go now. I wish they would... and out a man would escape if they do.

Brian Montgomery has not shirked printing this terrible letter. Because his tribute to his grandfather is honest in all its details we may find much in this book to reveal what the Empire in India was about, both for good and evil.

A Viceroys's India: Leaves from Lord Curzon's note-book by the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston has been edited by Peter King (192pp. Slogwick and Jackson. £12.95; 0 283 99166 6) as a selection from the two books of essays published near the end of the former Viceroy's life, *Tales of Travel* (1923) and *Leaves from a Viceroy's Note-book* (1926), to demonstrate the quality of his writing as a traveller and social observer. Four long essays derive from Curzon's journeys in, and political assessments of, north-west India and Afghanistan, and occupy over half the book. Shorter pieces describe incidents, pursuits and recurrent impressions of his viceregal years (1899–1905). The volume has ninety-eight half-tone and eleven colour illustrations.

Paperback biography

ARNOLD BENNETT. *The Journals*. 599pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 057 006. □ This selection was first published by Penguin in 1954, and material since made available has been added to complete a series covering Bennett's life from 1896 to 1929. It is a range which shows his social as well as his literary development, but equally reveals a consistency in the mode of observation; the same rather self-consciously literary approach to recording raw fact as a possible preparation for fiction is maintained throughout his writing career. His range of literary contacts is very wide: one can find here Eliot on the Waste Land notes or Osbert Sitwell reconciled to Siegfried Sassoon after a brief estrangement, as well as John Lane and Edith Philippotts from an earlier period. The plain text is usually intelligible without annotation, but it should never have been put out at such length without an index. Frank Swinnerton's sycular and affectionate introduction, which manages to say scarcely anything about the journals themselves, has long since bid its day, and in view of thirty years' subsequent biographical and editorial work was not worth reprinting as a preface to this useful selection.

A. S. B.
NEVILLE CARDUS. *Autobiography*. 288pp. Hamish Hamilton. £4.95. 0 241 11286 9. □ This *Autobiography* (first published in 1947, and reviewed in the *TLS* of September 20 that year) offers an extraordinary glimpse into a lost cultural terrain. Poor, illegitimate, Mancunian, besotted with cricket and learning, Cardus adopted a voracious and austere course of self-improvement that led him via the post of assistant cricket "pro" at Shrewsbury to C. P. Scott's *Manchester Guardian*. There he became both purple-prosed cricket correspondent and distinguished music critic. Entertaining anecdotes abound; the ravishments of Ranjitsingh and Emmott Robinson are evoked, Sir Thomas Beecham brought to bombastic life, the culture of high-minded liberal Lancashire exquisitely portrayed. Yet the prose, and the book, reeks of the agony of the midlife crisis and the tortured repression of the self. It is splendid, fascinating and irritating. Of his personal life – his marriage, his reasons for sitting out the Second World War in Australia, his feelings about the treatment meted out to him by Cyril Allington and Scott – there is scarcely a hint; of his work and milieu, an enchanting feast.

D. J.
EDWARD CECIL. *The Leisure of an Egyptian Official*. 314pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 0444 8. □ Lord Edward Cecil was attached to the Egyptian Civil Service as, consecutively, Under Secretary for War, Under Secretary for Finance and Financial Adviser, before and during the First World War. Originally written for the amusement of his family and friends this description of the work and social life of an Egyptian Official gives a vivid and humorous picture of the types of people and situations he has to deal with; more or less corrupt Egyptians, with plausible sounding schemes for, for example, selling the Government land it already owns; a meeting of adobe and soapstone Egyptian Ministers to discuss their summer offices, where one particularly fleshy Minister breaks his chair and Cecil is terrified that this will herald a demand for new office furniture; parties of various kinds – lunch parties, supper parties, balls. Everything is described brilliantly with a devastatingly accurate but light and funny touch.

M. E.
PETER J. FRENCH. *Jahn Dee: The world of an Elizabethan magus*. 243pp. Routledge & Kegan Paul. £6.95. 0 7102 0385 3. □ An enigma to his contemporaries just as much as to his biographers, John Dee's interests combined a mixture of the practical (Vitruvian architecture; navigation; Euclidean geometry and Copernicanism) with the magical and the mystical. Peter J. French's restrained biography remains the best single volume on Dee despite the reservations of the reviewer in the *TLS* of May 19, 1972. One of the most suggestive chapters is that devoted to Dee's diverse library, then the largest in England, though French did not live to investigate it as closely as he had hoped. Its full cataloguing and explanation is now in the hands of the Bibliographical Society.

GRAHAM GREENE (Editor). *The Old School*. 237pp. Oxford University Press. £3.50. 0 19 281482 2. □ This is an enterprising and timely resurrection of a book first published in 1934 and reviewed in the *TLS* of July 26 that year. The contributors include W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Bowen, L. P. Hartley, Harold Nicolson, Anthony Powell, Stephen Spender, Antonis White, and the editor himself, with others like H. E. Bates (Kettering), Sean O'Faolain (Cork) and Walter Greenwood (Salford) to leaven the dough of mainly public-school reminiscence from other parts of the social spectrum. The literary distinction of most of the essayists, several of whom have written about their school days elsewhere, gives their contributions an autobiographical interest greater than the educational theme or the accumulated details of Corps and Pop, fagging and the cane, "notions" and "bonour". The editor's preface announces the book as "a premature memorial" to "so odd a system of education" which it was not implausible fifty years ago to regard as "doomed". Its tenacity would no doubt have surprised most of Mr Greene's contributors of 1934.

A. S. B.
ANGELA HEWINS (Editor). *The Dillen: Memoirs of a man of Stratford-upon-Avon*. 180pp. Oxford University Press. £2.95. 0 19 281345 5. □ *The Dillen* contains the lightly edited memories of George Hewins, a well-known local "character" until his death in 1977, who was born in 1878 among the very poor of Stratford. His account of his first forty years begins with a passing mention of the rogue chemist who sold his mother "some medicine to get rid of" you, and continues the chronicle of his upbringing by his aunt Cal and a succession of jobs, poverty and struggle, which was intensified after marriage and children at the age of eighteen. George's account, which is presented here with a brief introduction, photographs, maps and glossary, was taped by his grandson's wife, Angela Hewins, between 1975 and 1977. It gives a good impression of the authentic voice of oral tradition, a sly narrative genius, interspersed with songs and snippets of dialogue. He tells stories (mainly local) and takes for granted aspects of poverty – such as his family's sleeping arrangements of six children in one bed; parents, baby and eldest son in the other – which now take an effort of will to believe.

L. D.
JULIAN MACLAREN-ROSS. *Memoirs of the Forties*. 348pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 057 016 0. □ This odd shapeless book, first published posthumously in 1965, and reviewed in the *TLS* of October 21 that year, is a production entirely characteristic of its author's later years. Alan Ross's introduction points to the long history of disregarded advances and unfulfilled promises that lies behind it. It is amazing that he was able to persuade MacLaren-Ross to write so much of his intended full autobiography, in chapter form, as *London Magazine* articles, for cash on the nail. Disjointed though the result is, it gives a highly evocative picture of the literary life of wartime Fitzrovia, with episodes involving Graham Greene, Cyril Connolly, Tambimuttu, Alun Lewis, and many others, as well as the pub culture so redolent of the place and period. Six short stories, several of them dealing with the administrative bungle of army authorities, conclude the volume. Mr Ross's introduction is a tribute to the memory of an unusually demanding writer and friend, but it must be supplemented by a chapter of Dan Davin's *Closing Times* and by Anthony Powell's autobiography to give more of the flavour of a man who will be remembered mainly as the original of X. Trappeneel in *A Dance to the Music of Time*.

T. G. D. F.
RICHARD OLLARD. *Pepys, a Biography*. 374pp. Oxford University Press. £3.95. 0 19 281 466 4. □ Ollard's *Pepys* was first published in 1974 and reviewed in the *TLS* of October 4 that year. Since then the palmary Latham and Matthews edition of the Diary has been completed, but the value of this biography has been enhanced by the general reader an excellent "provides for the general reader an excellent introductory study, especially of those parts of Pepys's life that are not documented with the fortunate provision of the eight diary years.

And for the Diary period the three chapters on "Style of Life", "Licence and Morality" and "Taste and Curiosity" provide a valuable commentary. This reprint has some shoddy "line drawings" but appears to lack the illustrations of the original, to which references have been allowed to remain in the text. The account of Pepys's Admiralty career has however been enhanced for this edition by the complete text of one of his navy reports, a "virtuoso performance" which shows his powers of official draftsmanship at their most impressive.

G. N.
JAMES THURBER. *The Years with Ross*. 274pp. Hamish Hamilton. £4.95. 0 241 11287 7. □ James Thurber's only biography, dealing with the career of his friend and editor on *The New Yorker*, Harold Ross, was first published in 1959, eight years after its subject's death. Its whimsically reminiscent manner tells more than any more formal analysis could of the way in which a tough, ill-read journalist managed to establish and maintain his magazine as a by-word in its day for metropolitan sophistication. Some of the most valuable pages give long extracts from Ross's tetchy but deadly accurate opinion sheets, showing the infinite pains he took to secure just the right literary formula for the paper. Whether such draconian supervision produced too standardized a result is another matter; even Ross himself, just before his death, said that "our trouble is we're in a plush-lined rut". Thurber's highly individual biography shows clearly why Ross came to find himself there.

T. G. D. F.
CHRISTOPHER WHITE. *Rembrandt*. 216pp with 171 illustrations, 16 in colour. Thames and Hudson. £3.95. 0 500 20195 1. □ In this new addition to the *World of Art* series, which was first published twenty years ago as *Rembrandt and his World* (reviewed in the *TLS* of August 27, 1964), Professor White has revised and rewritten much of his original text to take recent scholarship into account, and, more important, he has widened its scope by introducing into the narrative of Rembrandt's fraught life a constant thread of discussion of his art, with special emphasis on the graphic work and landscape, but without engaging in the polemic surrounding the interpretation of many famous paintings.

A. P.
Also in paperback
RICHARD BALDICK (Editor and translator). *Pages from the Gaiety Journal*. 434pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 057014 4. □ First published in 1962 and reviewed in the *TLS* of July 20 that year.

JOHN BEAMES. *Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian*. 311pp. Eland Books. £4.95. 0 907871 75 5. □ First published in 1961 and reviewed in the *TLS* of August 11 that year.

LESLEY BLANCH. *The Wilder Shores of Lave*. 323pp. Sphere Books. £2.95. 0 349 10329 1. □ First published in 1954 and reviewed in the *TLS* of October 1 that year.

EDWARD BLISHEN. *Sally Dad*. 217pp. Allison and Busby. £2.95. 0 85031 593 X. □ First published in 1978 and reviewed in the *TLS* of October 27 that year.

WILHELM BLUNT. *The Dream King: Ludwig II of Bavaria*. 198pp. Hamish Hamilton. £4.95. 0 241 11293 1. □ First published in 1970 and reviewed in the *TLS* of November 20 that year.

RICHARD BUCKLE. *Diaghilev*. 616pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.95. 0 241 11289 3. □ First published in 1979.

VICTORIA GLENORNING. *Via: The life of Vita Sackville-West*. 430pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 007161 X. □ First published in 1983 and reviewed in the *TLS* of September 30 that year.

IRIS ORIO. *Images and Shadows*. 278pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 0345 X. □ First published in 1970 and reviewed in the *TLS* of November 13 that year.

FRANCES PARTRIDGE. *Julia: A portrait of Julia Strachey*. 308pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 057 1017 9. □ First published in 1983 and reviewed in the *TLS* of May 13 that year.

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A line from Claude Rawson's review, in last week's *TLS*, of *The Poetical Works of Christopher Smart*, Volume II, was unfortunately omitted. The passage should have read: "Smart's imagination worked as often through parables fully and discursively explicated as it did through visionary-apophoric short cuts. His *Parables of our Lord*... *Dome into Familiar Verse* (1768) contain over eighty pieces

We apologize for an error in the penultimate paragraph of Malcolm Vale's review of Harry A. Miskimin's *Money and Power in Fifteenth-Century France* (October 5). The sentence in question should read: "At one point, he states that 'the connection between elevated mint production and major military encounters has, in my opinion, been established beyond doubt' while, two pages previously, he speaks of 'very low levels of mint production' in France, Burgundy and England at a time of decidedly major military encounters

Cecil Smith's *Musical Comedy in America*, referred to by Robert Cushman in his review (October 5) of *Broadway Babes* by Ethan Mordden, is now available in a revised and updated edition from Theatre Arts Books, 153 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10014.

John Co. 1316